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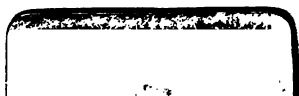
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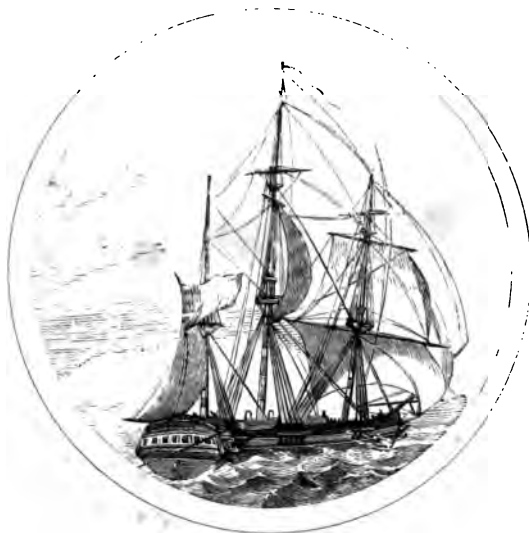
HUNTING THE WILD GOAT IN BOURBON.

HARRY LAWTON'S ADVENTURES

OR

A YOUNG SAILOR'S WANDERINGS

IN STRANGE LANDS.



WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, 54 FLEET STREET.

LONDON. MDCCCLXVI.



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HARRY LAWTON'S ADVENTURES.

CHAPTER I.

FIVE large and very pleasant corn-fields separated Beechwood Farm from the high road, along which daily passed the coach to R——. Through the middle one of the five, and close under the hedge, ran a tiny stream, which but a little further on flowed into a fine, broad river, the chief attraction of the neighbourhood. A neatly-kept path led from the house to the road, and just where the little stream intersected the fields, a narrow plank, with a single handrail, was thrown across it by way of a bridge.

It is at the stile close to this little rustic bridge that I wish to present to my readers the hero of the present history, young Harry Lawton, who, on a certain fine afternoon in his fourteenth year, had left the house to accompany his uncle, Captain Miller, who during the last week had been their guest, to the stage-coach just then nearly due.

The two had been taking the walk easily, and talking so earnestly, that they had forgotten the hour, when young Harry sprang on to the stile in order to assist his uncle over it; and raised in this manner from the ground he caught sight of the coach, and called to his uncle to 'put on more steam, or she would be gone before they could catch her.'

Thus roused, the old sea-captain quickened his pace, and after a sharp run pulled up, quite out of breath, by his nephew at the side of the road, protesting vehemently that 'he hated steam, and only that he hated still more to be beaten, he wouldn't have made a steam-engine of himself for any coach or coachman in the world!'

'Ah!' returned Harry, with a deep-drawn sigh, 'steam or no steam, I don't mind as long as I can only get away from this seedy old place: but of that, I suppose, there's no hope, unless *you* can manage to coax father over, uncle. I wish you'd try.'

'Well, we'll see about it, lad; only I'm not good at writing letters, and I could see it was no use talking to him. He's so fond of his land, and his house here, too; and I can't deny it's a pretty place, though *you* don't seem much to like it, Hal.'

'Like it!' returned the boy, with an impatient gesture. 'I hate the very sight of it! Why, it's just this horrid old farm that keeps me tied up here!'

'Never mind,' replied his uncle, laughing; 'I know just how you feel. But don't get out of patience; only wait a bit, and we'll carry you off to the antipodes yet. So cheer up, my hearty, and good-bye to you.'

And with these words Captain Miller scrambled on to the coach, which hardly stopped to take him up, and which Harry stood watching until it was out of sight. Then he turned on his heel, and moodily began to retrace his steps.

'A seedy old place,' was it? Well now, I must say, that very few people were of young Lawton's opinion; and besides, it was not very long since such an idea first came into his wise head. He soon came in sight of it, and, in order to get cool before he presented himself at home, he stood for a minute or two watching the white smoke as it curled up out of the old-fashioned chimney-pots, and

gradually disappeared among the foliage of the ancient elms behind the house, wishing with all his heart that he could only have as much liberty to escape.

Everything was old at Beechwood: that was perfectly true; and the little Gothic windows that still remained in the sides of the house and in the out-buildings plainly told that tale. But *old* and *seedy* are not always synonymous terms; nor were they in this case. For the house had never been suffered to fall into decay; it



had been kept in good repair, and was as comfortable a house to live in as it was picturesque to look at.

The roof was good and sound, though the old-fashioned red tiling had acquired some of those softened tints which only time can give, and although in some parts there were to be seen those patches of grey and yellow which are so pleasing in artists' eyes. The front, originally built of grey stone, had, it is true, been plastered over; and in some places this plaster had broken away, so as to

show the stones. Nor had this been repaired ; for Peter Lawton, in whose eyes the place had charms which his son Harry could not see, and who in his way was a man of taste, declared that he 'rather liked the appearance of it.'

Lattice casements had been introduced into the front, and were particularly pretty ones, having the luxuriant boughs of the noble old vine, which covered great part of the house, hanging over some of the upper corners, just sufficiently to take off any stiffness of form. Before the house were a grass-plot and a gay little garden, and a large farm-yard with all its usual inhabitants, crowing or lowing, cackling or squealing, according to their different powers and tastes ; and at the left, just past some ruined arches, flowed the river. At the right there were not wanting signs of a large kitchen-garden and orchard, just necessary to make the picture complete.

It was Peter Lawton's boast that his 'place had been painted over and over again, and that he had heard famous artists admire it ;' nor did he often approach it without a feeling of pleasure that he could call himself its master. Yet his young son and heir was now looking at it with no feeling but that of supreme disgust, which feeling had been growing on him of late ; and he was a boy of very strong feelings about everything that he felt at all. What he liked, he liked with all his heart ; and what he disliked, he disliked as cordially ; and in this respect he much resembled his father—both being such enthusiastic persons, that what they admired or desired seemed to them incontrovertibly the most desirable thing on earth : and this being the case, of course neither of them could brook any opposition or difference of opinion.

Mrs. Lawton had long since made this discovery, and had had forebodings of the storm that would probably arise whenever the wishes of father and son crossed each other. It was indeed, on this

account, no unmixed pleasure to her when her husband informed her that her sailor-brother was coming to them for a week ; for she had her fears as to the effect which his amusing stories might have on her own boy, of whose leaning towards the sea she had been for some time persuaded. The father, when once told of it, had treated it as a mere whim, to which, of course, he should not listen, and which, if the worst came to the worst, could soon be drubbed out of him ; but Mrs. Lawton remembered what her brother was at Harry's age, and saw that her boy was too much like what he had been for the matter to be so easily settled. She dreaded lest Harry should really leave her, and thus destroy at once all her husband's dreams of earthly happiness and prosperity, which she knew to be so fondly cherished ; and she dreaded even more any serious collision between the father and son. Indeed, this latter feeling caused her to lock up her fears within her own breast, and only to hope and pray that they might never be realised. At the same time, all she could do she did most diligently in the way of trying to get Harry to take an interest in his work, and to see that it was the work which God had given him to do at that present time.

But he had his own dreams of pleasure and happiness, and unhappily, too, his own ideas of right and wrong. Neither the corn nor the cattle ever occupied either his waking or sleeping thoughts, though they might sometimes occupy his hands. There might be a bad harvest or short hay-crop, small-pox among the sheep, or sickness among the pigs, and yet Harry's appetite was as good, and his sleep as sweet, as if all were prosperous ; and just because he took no interest in any of these things—because he was not old enough to care about questions of profit and loss ; and perhaps, also, because it was *not in him*, and never would be at any age, to trouble his head about such matters.

There was a time, when he was very little, when his father delighted to give him the name of 'madcap,' and to think that he bid fair to turn out something like his favourite English king, our Henry the Fifth, after whom he had been named. He had always wished for a boy of spirit, and fondly persuaded himself that boys of that sort always make sterling characters.

'He'll be steady enough when he gets a few years more over his head,' was always his answer when the mother complained of her little boy's dangerous pranks ; for, even when a very little one, Harry never seemed happy unless he was doing something venturesome, and putting his own or somebody else's life or limbs in danger.

The farmer laughed then ; but as the child got older, and his wildness became more troublesome, as he was caught playing truant from school, or complained of for his incorrigible idleness, he began to get vexed and angry. By degrees he left off laughing even at his wildest pranks, and had at times gloomy forebodings that his only son would turn out a worthless character. A madcap he had certainly turned out ; and a madcap is a very different person in a story and in real life.

However, as he would not mind his books, Farmer Lawton had already taken him away from school and set him to work in the fields, where the boy had made such discoveries regarding the strength of his father's will, that nothing could now be further from his intention than the idea of making *him* acquainted with his strong bent towards the sea. His mother already knew it ; for he had talked to her a year ago, during the time when Captain Miller's son was staying with him for a month. Joe Miller had been a favourite with every one ; for he was a sensible, good-tempered, and open-hearted sort of lad ; and as he had been already several voyages with his father, he was, like him, full of amusing talk. Of course he was

a regular sailor ; and Farmer Lawton had no objection whatever to that, being a thorough-going man himself, and one who couldn't bear a half-and-half character. Joe was born and bred to the sea ; and while resolved that his own boy should be a landsman, there was no man better able to appreciate an honest British tar than Peter Lawton. Perhaps he might have liked Joe less had he been aware that it was he who first awakened that strong longing in Harry's heart, which was fast growing to a passion. Yet Joe did it innocently enough, for he would have been the last to try to sow dissension in any family ; and he really was vexed with himself when he found out what he had done, especially when he saw the distress of Mrs. Lawton, and heard from her how Harry's father had struggled and worked to buy that place, how he loved his home, and how it was the height of his ambition to see the property improving yearly, and so to leave Harry master of it at last. So Joe told his cousin, that 'he had no more business to covet *his* work and line of life, than he had to desire his father's farm ;' and gave his promise to Harry's mother that he would try to undo the mischief that he had done.

But when Joe's father came to Beechwood he took a different view of the state of things, and told his sister that he was downright certain that Hal would never make a good farmer ; and that, therefore, she had better make up her mind to let him be turned into a good sailor. Once, too, he had tried the farmer himself, but the storm that he roused soon caused him, as he said, to 'tack about and take in his sails again.' But he had declared to his sister his intention to write to his brother-in-law, and advised her strongly to be a prudent woman, and 'not persist in holding the lid of a boiling pot too tightly down.' So he had departed, and I leave mothers to imagine poor Mrs. Lawton's state of mind.

We left Harry on his way home again, and not in a very amiable temper at that moment; yet, for all that, I should be sorry to give the impression that he was a cross-grained, sour sort of lad: for, indeed, that would be very far from the truth. On the contrary, when he was in his element, and with people who could understand him, he was the most light-hearted, generous fellow in the world; and his mother knew that he *had* a heart, even while, in order to please himself, he felt little scruple about breaking hers.

It was just as well for him that morning that the great market at the neighbouring town had taken his father away from home; and not a bad thing either that the first person whom he met as he approached the house was old Roger Winter, who had served the family faithfully for many a long day. Harry had been used to make a sort of confidant of him; for the old man loved all his master's family, and this boy was as dear to him as his own grandchildren, and I believe had as large a place in his thoughts and prayers.

He saw him coming over the last field, and marked how he seemed to take a sudden resolution as he entered the farm-yard; so, knowing where he had been, he guessed all the rest, and determined that the first burst should be spent on himself, and not on Mrs. Lawton. Coming forward out of the barn-door, where he had been resting a moment, with his sickle in his hand, he walked straight up to Harry, and looking him full in the face he laid his other hand on his shoulder, saying,—

‘Master Hal, there’s some’at amiss with you, I knows: what is’t, now? You’ll tell the old fellow, I know, that can’t a-bear a-seeing of you vexed: won’t you, now?’

‘Nonsense, Roger!’ returned Harry, trying to shake him off; ‘do you think I am going to tell *you* everything? Let go, I say! I’m going after mother.’

‘Nay, Master Harry, dear; you’re not a-going to worry her now, be ye, when she’s not well an’ all?’

‘Who says she’s not well? She was well enough an hour ago!’ returned Harry, sharply. ‘Come, you’re not going to play tricks on me, old fellow. Besides, I must see her, for I’ve got something to tell her; so let go, I say!’

‘I know you have,’ returned the old man; ‘and what’s more, I knows what it is, young master. But she ain’t well, and I know it, if you don’t. I see it in her face at dinner-time; so you’d better come along with me and help us get in that field of corn out yonder. It won’t get no good if rain comes to-night, as very like it will; and then master would be angered enough with us all, and say we won’t do nothing when he’s not by.’

‘He couldn’t be angered with me, then, for that,’ said Harry, ‘for I’m not used to reaping. I never learned yet; and it’s no good learning now, for it’ll be no use to me in the trade I mean to follow.’

He intended to look very determined as he said this; but there was something in Roger Winter’s way that he never could withstand; and in another minute, to his own surprise, he found himself walking away with him, sickle in hand, to take his first lesson in reaping.

‘It’s all trouble lost; you might just as well spare yourself the pains,’ he grumbled on, ‘for my mind’s made up, Roger: so there’s an end of it.’

‘Made up, young master! and how came that about? Why, it wasn’t made up last night, by your own saying. Sure and your uncle has never been and persuaded you to fly in the face of your own father? I thought better of him than that.’

‘Did I ever say so?’ answered the boy, crossly. ‘But he told

me that he knew how I felt, and that I wasn't the fellow to settle down here. So it comes to the same thing. I'll try mother once more; and uncle's going to write to father; and then, if he won't give in by fair means he must by foul: so now you know my mind.'

Roger Winter heaved a deep sigh, and did not answer for a minute or two; and his silence probably made Harry more uncomfortable than anything he could have said. At last he answered,—

'Well, Master Hal, I certainly never should ha' guessed that of *you*.'

'And why not of *me*, Roger?' returned Harry, angrily.

'Because,' said the old man, slowly and seriously, 'I thought you know'd your duty better.'

'Duty!' retorted Harry: 'is it my duty to settle down to what I hate for the whole of my life?'

'We can't always choose our work, Master Hal; can we? There's lots of us wouldn't be what we are if we could help it. Besides, you don't know whether you'd like farming or not till you fairly try it; and that's just what you haven't done yet, I say.'

'Nor ever will,' returned the boy. 'I don't see why I should be forced to it. Every one has a right to choose his trade, I say; and I'm not going to be made a slave of for any one.'

'Stay!' said the old man; 'it's too bad to go on so about a father like yours. Just see how he's slaved for you, and how he pleased himself with the thought of your being master here one day; and ax yourself, my lad, if you wouldn't be put out yourself if you had a boy that went on as you do?'

'I know he means well enough. Who said he didn't?' answered the boy; 'but what if he has made a mistake, and wants to

force me into what I never shall like, must I be miserable for life because I must be ruled by his mistake?’

‘Better be forced by another nor force your own self into a calling that may never be meant for you, my boy. There’s a book that tells us to mind our fathers’ and mothers’ words; but I never could read in it that we ought to be pushing and driving ourselves wherever we liked to go. You’ve got to learn yet, my dear lad, that no one is ever happy in a path of his own choosing. Why can’t you take it easy now, and see if things wouldn’t work round in time? Maybe, if you were a good lad, the father might give in after all, and then you’d be a happier sailor than ever you’d be if you run away. But let’s get to our reaping; that’s the business at this time o’ day: the rest must wait; and I know you better than to believe you’re a-going to break all our hearts; and I won’t believe it, not for any one.’

A couple of hours’ labour at a new sort of employment was not without its effects in cooling what Harry would have called his courage, but what, perhaps, we might have called by a less noble name; and he went home at length half inclined to say nothing at all till Uncle Miller’s letter came. But his downcast looks did not escape the eye of his father, who took the first opportunity of asking his wife if she knew what he was sulking about.

‘You know I told you, Peter, of the fancy which Joe’s visit had put into his head, and I have my fears that he has been discontented ever since; and what’s more, that his uncle’s stay along with us has done no good,’ answered Mrs. Lawton, much relieved at being able to talk of her trouble, but half-frightened directly after by the irritation with which this information was received.

‘Ah! if that were all, the young rascal might sulk; but work he should, and stick to his work too; and if words wouldn’t make him,

why he should feel the weight of his arm—that he should! He'd have no whims in his house, and no boys setting themselves up as wiser than their elders. How could he know what he liked or what he didn't? the lazy young scamp! For his part he didn't think he liked anything but play.'

Poor Mrs. Lawton! The whole thing just seemed to her like a story which she knew by heart long ago, and the end of it as certain as if her boy were already gone. But there was one sorrow which might yet be averted through her means, and that was a breach between her husband and her son; and her efforts were so far successful that the evening passed away without any allusion to the subject.

The postman was by no means a daily visitor at Beechwood; but he came next morning. Harry took the letter in, and guessing from whom it came, he made his escape before his father could break the seal.

It ran thus:—

'DEAR BROTHER-IN-LAW,

'Perhaps you may think it's queer of me to send you a letter so soon after I parted from ye; but I have my reasons for so doing. Only that I mayn't be too hasty in bringing them out, let me just say first, how much I enjoyed myself down in your pretty place, of which I don't wonder at your being so fond, more especially after all the pains you've taken with it. And I may say this much by way of compliment, that if *I could* have settled any ways on land, I wouldn't wish to settle in a neater little spot.

'But I never could: there was something in my blood that wouldn't be quiet ashore; and though I don't pretend to say I was right in bolting off in the way I did, which I've often been sorry for

since, especially in times of storms and such-like, yet I do say that, whatever I may have been at sea, I know I should have made a worse landsman.

‘And talking of my boyish days, brings me quite easy to what I want to say. There’s that boy of yours, I know you’ve cut him out for a home-bird. You’ve worked for him and planned for him; and certainly you’ve got as pretty a little property to give him as any lad need wish. But, my good fellow—now don’t be angry, for I can’t help saying it, however you may take it—what if he is *made* for something else? What if he has got the very nature of a sea-bird, and none of that of the land ones?’

‘I can’t say any more, only that it’s my belief that some boys are made for the ocean; and a good thing too, as we can’t do without sailors; and from what I saw of your Harry, I should say he’s one of this sort. He has got the fidgets on shore and will never be quiet there, but only bore every one. I know it would go hard to part with him; and perhaps, old sailor though I am, I might wish for your sake he was different. But you can’t alter people’s natures; and if you make them do what they are not cut out for, do they often succeed, I ask you?’

‘So now you know why I’m sending this; and I only hope you’ll take it friendly, as ’tis meant. My love to Sarah and the girls; and don’t you be too cross with me or the boy.

‘I am, your affectionate brother-in-law,

‘JOSEPH MILLER.’

The farmer took this letter more quietly than his wife expected; he read it over two or three times with rather a contemptuous curl of the upper lip, then, quietly remarking that ‘he was very much obliged to her brother for his advice, which was natural enough,

coming from him, and that nobody was going to be offended with such a good sort of an old fellow as he was,' he walked off into the fields, whistling a harvest-song, and showing no inclination to allude to the subject again.

So, after all, nothing seemed likely to come of it ; and Harry watched all that day, and the next, and the next, without saying a word to his father, only getting more and more impatient, and expending his impatience on his poor mother, whom he kept conjuring, 'if she cared for him the least bit in the world, to take his part, and back up his uncle's letter.'

She, on her side, could only entreat him to put aside the idea ; and she tried to do this calmly, that her words might have more weight : but at last she could stand out no longer, and began to weep bitterly. And then Harry, who never could bear the sight of his mother's tears, rushed away to his room, and gave way to the most passionate lamentations on the hardness of his own fate.

His red eyes told their own tale, and though they were not apparently noticed, yet when Harry made his appearance in the parlour in the evening he was received with a stern inquiry, 'what all this fretting and sulking was about ?'

It will be better, perhaps, not to relate the conversation which followed : such scenes are almost always best left undescribed ; and, as will be imagined, there was in this instance no lack of angry, passionate words, on either side—the father venting his feelings in loud and vehement reproaches, and inveighing against his son's selfishness, self-will, and ingratitude ; and the son assuming the tone of a very ill-used and unkindly-treated individual, who, if he *must* give in, was condemned to a life-long misery.

Yet, notwithstanding, Mrs. Lawton could not help feeling surprised at the entire absence of any threat of absconding on the one

hand, and of any positive refusal of permission to go on the other. Little did she then guess who had been her earnest ally in effecting this measure of moderation ; for she was not at that time aware that her husband, as well as her son, had had a talk with old Roger. Strange to say, however, after this explosion of feeling, the father and son seemed to understand one another better. Harry began to be more hopeful, and his father to feel that it would be the wisest course to let him follow his own inclinations, though at the same time he fell into a state of depression so different to his usual character, that it was very painful to all who noticed it.

Captain Miller's letter got answered somehow, though nobody knew when the answer was written ; and then came another letter from him, another talk over it with his wife, and various disputes and wrangles with his son, till, after a time, it seemed to be understood on all hands that Harry was to go to sea. All his bad humours, and a great part of his idleness, disappeared then at once ; and while every one else's spirits were sinking, his were going up to boiling heat. Strange creatures are young boys ! and especially boys of a nautical turn.

The questions then remaining to be settled were only about the vessel in which he was to sail, the character of the captain, and where he was to go for his first voyage. That it must not be a short one was his uncle's decided opinion ; 'for boys took whims into their heads, and sometimes got sick of the hardships and roughness before they knew much about anything else. If Harry went to sea, he must stick to it.' And both father and mother saw the soundness of this advice, much as it went against their natural feelings. So, after many inquiries, a berth was found for him on board a merchant-vessel going to China, which was expected to be absent for about two years.

'Ah! Master Hal, so you've got your own way at last; and I hope you may never have to repent of it. It ain't made none of us no merrier; but that you don't seem much to care about,' was Roger's greeting to him as soon as the matter was finally settled.

'Ah, you'll all do well enough without me by-and-bye, Roger; for you know I've been the plague of your lives for a long, long time. When I come home again, I must try to make up for it all, by bringing you lots of curiosities from the other side of the world. And oh! what fun to think of the yarn I shall spin when I see you all again! I shall be almost as good company then as Uncle Miller, or Cousin Joe; and I'll warrant you won't think me a fool then for going to sea—that you won't!'

'If you ever do come back, Master Hal, we'll tell you what we think about you,' answered the old man, gravely. 'But two years is a good bit to reckon on so certainly as you're a-doing; and then, life's always in danger at sea, as far as I can learn.'

'Pooh, Roger! that's all women's talk. I know all about that. Of course people tumble overboard sometimes, and there come storms, and leaks, and all sorts of dreadful things. That's just why I like the life. It's not tame, and smooth, and steady, all alike one day after another, as it is here. There's something exciting, and something to keep one alive. Besides, don't people die ashore? Ain't there accidents, and fevers, and nobody knows what, here? It's all fudge, I say. So don't be trying to turn me back into a baby.'

'No fudge to my mind, young gentleman; though I knows there be dangers here, and plenty of 'em. We're always in danger, wherever we go; and 'tis never safe to be knocking about in your fashion, neither ashore nor at sea . . .'

‘What do you mean by that?’ broke in Harry. ‘In my fashion! what do you mean?’

‘Without a guide worth trusting, a guard worth having, or the least notion of the port you’re a-going to,’ answered Roger, gravely.

‘A guard and a guide for me!’ returned Harry, colouring. ‘What stuff! And I don’t know to what port I’m going! Why, didn’t I just tell you it was likely to be Hong-Kong, first of all?’

‘I thought you’d take my meaning better, Master Hal,’ replied the old man, quietly. ‘’Twas of another voyage that I was thinking: it may be a longer, or it may be a shorter one; but, after all, that’s the voyage that your mother thinks most about; and a dreadful thing it would be to make shipwreck in that!’

CHAPTER II.

THE long-wished-for day of Harry Lawton's life came at last ; but I am not sure that it proved quite as delightful as he had anticipated ; for there were certain clouds over his happiness, which, in his reckoning, he had forgotten to take into account. Some of these clouds, too, appeared much blacker when right over his head than he could ever have imagined, especially the one which hung over him when he saw his mother's grief at parting, and listened to her last tender words of caution and of warning. The next serious one overshadowed him at bidding old Roger Winter farewell ; and perhaps not the lightest weighed down his spirit when his father was obliged to quit the deck of 'The Gazelle,' with the other persons not belonging to the vessel, at eight o'clock on the evening before she set sail from Liverpool ; for there was a sort of resigned look of bitter disappointment in his face as he wrung his hand for the last time that entered into Harry's very soul.

I dare say that the common question will rise to many persons' lips, 'What sort of a morning had he for sailing?' For people always seem to want to know that. Nevertheless, as all my information about the voyage must be derived from Harry's own letter, and as he says nothing about it, I cannot satisfy such persons :— indeed, now I come to think of it, I believe the vessel weighed her anchor at midnight.

It was not intended that she should touch anywhere until she arrived at the first port where she was to do business ; which was, as Harry had told old Roger, at the little island of Hong-Kong. His parents were, therefore, greatly surprised when they opened his budget, which arrived two or three mails after it was due, to find it dated from 'Banjermassin, Barit River, Isle of Borneo.' It ran as follows :—

‘ MY DEAR MOTHER,

‘ You’ll be rather taken aback, I expect, by my present address, as given above ; so I’ll begin by telling you that I am quite well and very jolly, as I have been ever since I got over my sea-sickness, which was horrid to bear, and no mistake, especially as I was never allowed to go to bed, however bad I felt ; because they say you get over it quicker if you don’t think about it. Very fine talking that ! But sailors don’t make much of small troubles : that I know by this time.

‘ Now I hope father won’t be jealous at my writing only to you ; it will do for him too, as we have no secrets between us now : and it strikes me that I can make my “yarn,” as they call it on board ship, more entertaining if I put all into one letter, and don’t have to find something different to say to each.

‘ I will begin from the very time we left Old England ; only I must not forget to tell you something about our crew ; for I know you well enough ever to forget how much you think of the company I keep. “ Evil communications corrupt good manners.” Don’t I remember the Sunday when you made me learn that text, and what a blowing-up father gave me for chumming so much with young Jack Featherstone ? I should think I just do ! However, one hasn’t much choice of one’s friends aboard-ship ; though, of

course, one needn't be too thick with the fellows one doesn't like. Still it is not just the thing to be on bad terms with any one, and might be awkward, shut up as we are together for so long.

' You heard so much of our captain that I needn't tell you a great deal about him. I like him better now than I did ; and most of the men like him well enough ; only he is tremendously strict. Father would think that a very good job, no doubt ; and perhaps it is for me, though it's not very pleasant to be ordered about as if you were a slave, and not to dare to answer a word about anything.

' The first mate, Mr. Brownlow, is more to my taste ; but, somehow, he seems to have taken a fancy to me, I think : so, perhaps, that is the reason I like him. He told me one day that he meant to write to father and let him know what he thought of me—" that I was just the stuff they make sailors of ;" but I suppose you haven't heard yet, as this is the first opportunity we had of posting letters home, and mine wouldn't be after his, I should think.

' The second mate nobody likes ; and the less said about him the better. But the other apprentice is a nice sort of chap ; so he and I get on well together. And then there are the sailors. You wouldn't care to know all their names ; but I mustn't forget to mention two that are very good fellows, and make us capital fun at times : they are Jim, the carpenter, and Mick, an old man that I know you would like. He's just the one, too, that Roger Winter would be glad to know is here ; and though the men jeer a bit at him now and then, and tell him he's too strict for them, they're glad enough to have him aboard when there comes a storm, for more reasons than one.

' The cook, too, is a friend of mine ; which is no bad thing, I can tell you : for it's only those he takes to that can get their

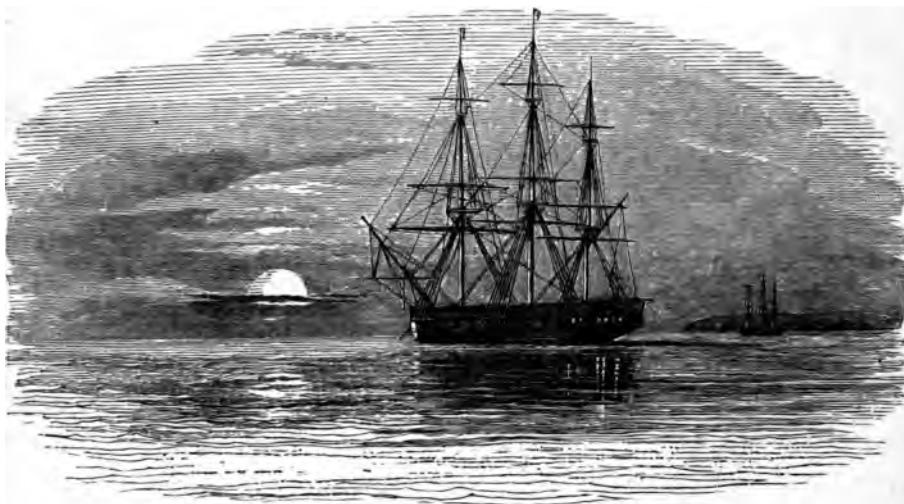
stockings dried, or any other little matters done for them by the fire, after they've been on deck for hours, and, maybe, have got a good soaking. But we don't have much time for talking, for whenever we're on deck we are obliged to be doing something; and it's against rules to talk at work—though most of the men do talk when no officer is near.

' Whenever it's fine we have service on Sunday; and some part of the day we have to ourselves—that is, I mean, to sit together, and read or talk, as we feel inclined: but even on Sundays the decks must be washed down, and the rigging attended to; and when it's rough weather we must be at one thing or another all day, just like working days: it can't be helped.

' I'm telling you all these things first, you see, just as you told me. So you see, after all, I don't forget everything.

' As to the six working days, why we're never idle. On board ship it's not allowed; and if they can't find anything else for the men, why they set them to pick oakum, or to scrape the rust off the cable:—anything rather than allow them to be idle. As to my usual work, it would be hard to describe it. Sometimes I'm set to climb among the masts and yards, and work among the rigging; and I recollect being sent up ever so high, for the first time, when I was so sick I couldn't stand—clean emptied out, too; and when I hadn't eaten a scrap for two days. It was when I had got safe down again, and glad enough not to have broken my legs in getting down, that old Mick first spoke to me, and advised me to "try another tack, and take some salt beef and biscuit aboard, if I wanted to get my ribs well sheathed;" and I tried that plan and found it answer. So tell grandfather to try it next time he's forced to go across the Channel. As for me, I don't believe I shall be sick any more all my life.

‘ But I didn’t take so much notice of the things that went on until we were right out at sea, just because I was bothered so with those horrid qualms. There came a calm once for a few hours, after we had reefed in all our sails, because the wind had been dead against us, and there we lay just off the coast of Ireland ; and I remember it was a splendid sunset that evening. I felt better just then ; but the sea soon rose again, and we began pitching about, and I was bad as ever for two or three days. So, by the time I was all right, we were far away from any land.



‘ I must say I was vexed to think of all the curious places that we were passing, without even a peep at them ; but there are more wonderful things on the sea itself than ever you dreamt of, mother.

‘ We had fine weather for about a fortnight—not a squall all that time ; and you should just have seen the sun rise of a morning.

‘ You always liked sunrise at home ; but you can’t imagine how

grand it looks over the sea. We had to go first into the Atlantic Ocean, you know; and there the waters are bluer than anywhere else—so some folk say: but it is a great deal rougher there than it is here.

‘ Well, as I told you, we went out ever so far to sea—quite away from France or Spain; and the first land we got a glimpse of was one of the Azores, or Western Isles,—that little group that you know I was such a time learning to find on the map. We didn’t touch there, though, only saw it in the distance; and Madeira and the Canary Isles we never even got a peep at.

‘ The captain didn’t mean to go within sight of Cape Verde Isles either; but you’ll see in a minute how we were blown close to them, much against his will.

‘ But I must tell you, that from the time we left the shores of England and Ireland we never spoke a single ship, nor tried to, till we got to that point.

‘ Several times we heard the cry of “Sail ho!” and once I gave it out myself at the top of my voice; for I thought I should have the chance of sending you just a scrap of a note; but ’twas no good, for we weren’t allowed to go a step out of our way to “speak her;” and a horrid shame I thought it was.

‘ We had fine weather all the way to the Cape Verdes, so one day was much like another; only there were many things to be seen that were new to me: great *islands* of sea-weed in some parts; oh, such quantities! you never saw anything like it. The sea-weed at Ramsgate was only a joke to it; and yet we thought there was a good lot there—didn’t we?

‘ Then another day we saw a dolphin, and a pretty creature it was; only we didn’t catch that one, at which I was very vexed. It swims so fast—faster than any salt-water fish, they say;

and it is of a most beautiful shape ; and this one looked so nice as the sun shone on its back, for it was only a little under the water. A few days after, I am glad to tell you, we came into quite a shoal of them, and were fortunate enough to catch one. When this fish is dying its colours get splendid ; and I wish you could have seen ours.

‘ Well, it was only two days after this that the weather began to change. I saw the captain peering about, and looking rather fidgety, and guessed there was something brewing up. It was getting towards night, so I should never have guessed that the little clouds on the horizon meant anything ; but it was fortunate that he did, or else we should have never been ready for what soon came.

‘ We’ve four passengers on board, you know ; a lady and gentleman and their little girl, besides a very old man who seems to be ill. So these four soon got notice to keep below ; and a good thing they did, for they would have been precious in the way. I could hear the little girl crying when I was sent down for something once ; and her mamma looked just as white as a sheet when the captain told her that he saw there was a gale coming on us.

‘ You would have admired our captain then, standing so quietly to watch what had to be done ; but we soon heard him shouting the orders through his speaking-trumpet ; and if you’d seen us sailors running about then, you’d have thought we were a lot of cats.

‘ It had begun by a curious kind of whispering noise over the waters ; then the wind got up gradually, and the dark waves rolled and tossed about, and their tops began to have white crests of foam.

‘ “ All hands ahoy ! ” roared out the captain ; “ reef in topsails ! ” and it was good fun to see how the men sprang on to the yards, and

furled up first one sail, then another, till we only had our jib and foresail left.

‘Down came the rain then in large, heavy drops, and our ship flew before the wind, just anywhere it liked to drive her. We went up on the top of one mountain of a wave, and the next minute we were down and buried between two others. Oh, how it howled and growled that night! and how the poor ship did toss about, to be sure! The waves beat on it and over it so, too, that I thought we should have gone all to pieces; but towards morning all got quiet again, and then Jim laughed at me for thinking it anything of a storm. “I should be well off if I never saw worse than that,” he told me; only the worst of it was, that we were out of our course entirely, and were close on to one of these little islands. It seemed funny to me that they couldn’t get back again to the right line; and I found out afterwards that, for all his laughing, we had got a good deal of damage, so that the vessel couldn’t be managed easily. The weather was pretty quiet then, and we knew we were close to land by the birds that kept flying over the deck. Some came that were called sea-mews, who kept close to us, and gave us some fun in feeding them. Some of the men caught two of them, and tried to make them walk about the deck; but they were bad hands at that, though they do fly so fast and high. None of the sailors would have killed them for anything, I believe. The little girl wanted one, to have it stuffed; but they declared we should have a calm directly if we killed it.

‘Next day we were almost becalmed, however, though we didn’t kill it; so her father turned the laugh on them. We were close to one of the islands then, and could see the shore and the hills, and almost the trees and houses: but while Richard (that’s the other young fellow’s name) and I were just saying to each other how nice

it would be to land and have a run on shore again, just for an hour or two, we heard a cry of "Ship ho!" from the "look-out;" and pleased enough we were to hear the orders given for trying to get speech of her.

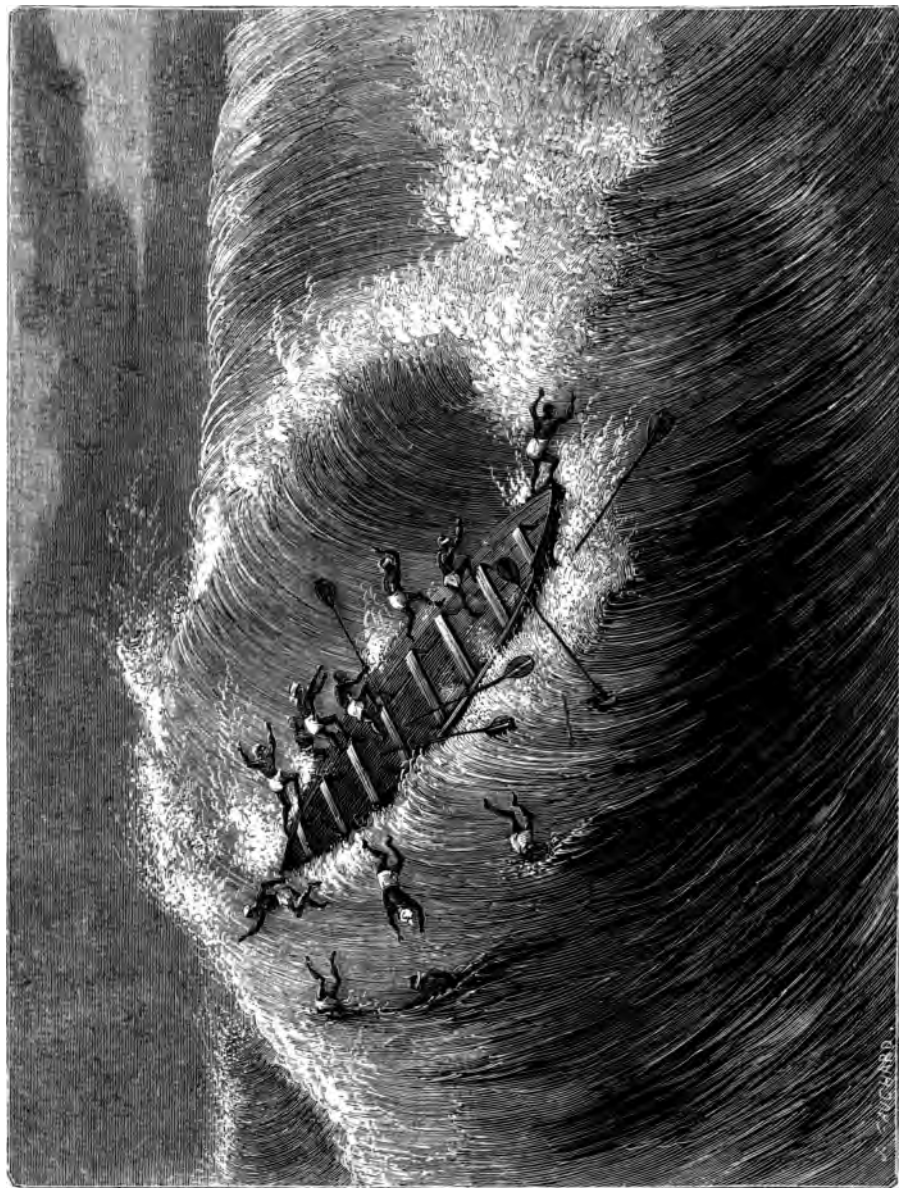
'She was a homeward-bound Indiaman; and I suppose the captain wanted to send a message back how we had been hindered; but it was no good. She came pretty close, and evidently saw us and waited for us; but the wind was rising again, and we were drifting off, and soon found ourselves just where we didn't want to be—that is, in the Guinea current, and tearing along like mad before the wind.

'But "it's an ill wind that blows nobody good," and now you shall hear what this north-wester blew me to see.

'The ship was out of repair—there was no doubt of that; and the carpenter couldn't do anything with her until we had her quiet; so, as by this time we had found ourselves in the Bight of Benin, it was determined that we should lay-to there in the first quiet creek or harbour we could find; and in that part we were hanging about for more than a week; and though we didn't land anywhere we had some Frenchmen aboard one day, who told us a good deal about the people thereabouts, who are called Dahomians, and are a savage, warlike set of people. A Russian sailor also came on board, and was taken on by the captain, as one of the men was ailing, and we wanted another hand. He spins a very good yarn sometimes, and is a nice fellow enough.

'It was when we were just standing out again that we saw what the little picture made of it by Dick, and sent you as a present, will show. I hope you'll know him, himself, one of these days, for he's a jolly good fellow.

'That's the Bar of Wydah, one of the seaports of Dahomey; and



there are a few French factories there belonging to houses of business in France. This Bar is one of the most extraordinary sea-sights to be seen anywhere in the world ; but I hardly know how to make you understand what it is. It looks like three enormous lines of breakers, the most prodigious things in the world ; and that's just what it is : only the puzzle is, why they are always there, on most parts of the year at least, and why there are always three. Some people say it's because the wind blows nine months in the year from the south-west, and drives the waves on to a sandy beach, that is so scorching hot that it sends the water dashing about in this style. At any rate, whatever makes this Bar, I wish you could see it ; for it is a rare sight.

‘ The best of it is when there's a boat on the top, though. Would you ever have thought of people trying to pull through such a sea ? I suppose white people couldn't ; but the negroes don't seem to mind. And at each of these French factories there is kept a sort of canoe, made out of one trunk, and just alike at each end ; and this is sent out manned by negroes.

‘ Oh, you should see them ! They row with light, short oars, in the cleverest way, but they never let their oars rest on the side of the boat at all ; and yet they go along like lightning almost. They are all naked ; and the leader of them stands at one end, with a longer oar than the rest.

‘ If they can keep the end of the boat quite straight to the wave it's all right ; only the spray sometimes nearly fills the boat with water, which they have to bail out between the waves ; but if they turn a bit, over they all go directly—niggers and oars, and all. Of course, you'd think they'd be drowned ; but not a bit of it. They can swim just like fishes, and they pick themselves up, and their boat too, and get in again and go along just as if nothing had happened.

at least, unless a shark should get hold of one and make his dinner of him, which is not uncommon.

‘But I must get along with my story, or it will never be done.

‘We soon left the coast of Dahomey, and put out again to sea, all right and tight. I wanted badly to keep along shore, and see something of the coast of Africa; but ’twas no good wishing, for we were very soon out of sight of land again; and in a little while we had crossed the line and I was a true son of Neptune. They play you all sorts of tricks as you cross, if you haven’t got money to buy off with: but, fortunately, I had enough spare cash to satisfy the fellows; so I got no ducking, nor anything else.

‘On we went after that, without anything particular happening, and without seeing land again for ever so long. Round the Cape of Good Hope we went, without seeing anything of it; but that’s a pleasure to come, I hope. Perhaps we may touch in our way back.

‘Next I heard that we had left Madagascar and Mauritius behind, and that we were now in the Indian Ocean; so I almost expected that we should have no more adventures till we got to China: at least there only seemed a chance of some fun in going through the Straits. There are two of them though, as you’ll see by the map,—the Malacca Straits on the north of the long island of Sumatra, and the Straits of Sunda to the south of it, and just between it and Java.

‘The captain wanted to go through those on the north, because our water was running short, and he intended to put in for more at Singapore; but just as we had turned the ship’s head in that direction there came on one of the sharp squalls which are so common in the Indian Ocean, and which take the best sailors by surprise. The monsoon from the north-east was blowing; and it caught us so

violently that we were forced to go southward against our will, and run into shelter in a sort of natural harbour in the Sunda Straits until the storm was over. It is extraordinary to be quite quiet and comfortable one hour, and the next in the midst of tremendous thunder and lightning, and rain and hail, such as you never see in England ; and then perhaps, in half an hour, to have the weather all fine again, and be sailing along as if there had been nothing at all.

‘ So, you see, we escaped without any damage this time ; only we couldn’t well touch at Singapore, as the wind was still strong from the north. But Mr. Brownlow, our first mate, recommended that we should put in somewhere in the island of Borneo, where he had some Dutch friends ; and that’s how I come to write from here, you see.

‘ I like the change very much, for I shall often have a chance of seeing Singapore, I dare say : but English ships don’t so often stop here ; and there’s plenty to see, I can tell you,—a good deal more than we shall see in a day or two, for it’s the largest island in the world, except Australia ; and the equator runs right through it. A fine country it seems, too, with plenty of mountains, and woods, and rivers. This river Barit is a noble old fellow, and there are two others about as large, all running south.

‘ The natives are called Dayaks : they are regular savages, and seemingly rather fierce ones, as they ornament some of their buildings with skulls, and give them to the children to play with like balls ; but they are cleverer than most savages, and know how to work their gold mines, and to build large floating houses, though I don’t know exactly what for. Some of the Kampongs or Dayak villages are very curious, for the houses are built on the top of great piles or stakes, because the ground is often under water. The

people do not wear too many clothes ; but the men are fond of putting on quantities of ornaments, especially feathers, which they stick in their heads. The women don't wear so many ornaments ; so, you see, they are just the opposite to English men and women. These Dayaks have all sorts of superstitious ways and notions, and one very odd one about dogs, which seem to be their favourite animals.

‘ They have a great respect for them, and think that they have souls something like ours ; so when a dog dies, his master wraps up his body very carefully in different stuffs, digs a hole near his house, and puts into it, besides the dead dog, some rice and some salt, and then covers it all down together. But he spreads a little rice and salt also on the top of the ground, in order to induce the god of the dogs to come and take his dog's soul to the dogs' paradise. He also puts up a sort of tombstone, on which he hangs the heads and paws of the stags and boars which the dog killed when he was alive.

‘ It would be a good thing if they had no worse customs ; but I think they have a great many that are more absurd and more horrible. One is, that they have a way of shutting up their girls, as soon as they get about seven or eight, in a little narrow cell, where they are kept for six or seven years, seeing nobody but the slave who waits on them. They do it to make the girl small and delicate ; and when the poor thing comes out she is as weak and pale as possible, and can hardly walk at all.

‘ They offer human sacrifices too, sometimes ; and really no people can want missionaries to teach them better ways and notions more than these poor Dayaks : but I don't think they have many, if any. I have seen some of the people, especially the women, that were tattooed in the most hideous way ; and Mr. Brownlow has told me of a great many things that he has seen among them while he has been staying here : but they would take too long to write.



NOCTURNAL DANCE OF THE DAYAKS.

Once he went into the house of a sick person, and found a man trying to drive out the evil spirit, for they always think you are possessed if you happen to be ill : and once he had to pass through one of their villages at night, and saw the people busy at a nocturnal dance before a great, hideous, stone head. The men had their weapons by their sides, and feathers stuck in their heads ; and there was a great fire burning before the image, which made them all look very horrible : but he couldn't discover what the stone head was for at all.

‘ Besides the Dayaks, there are a lot of Malays living in the island. Those people are rather fond of travelling to foreign lands, you know, and especially of going anywhere by sea ; but some of them must have been settled here a long time. Then there are a good many Chinese, who, in spite of all their boasting, are often very glad to get away from their “flowery land,” in times of civil war or any other great misery. But the Dutch call themselves masters of a good part of the island, and I suppose they built some of the large towns,—Banjermassin for one, and Pontianak on the west side of the country ; and good large towns they are. We shall leave this strange island to-morrow ; but this letter will get sent home through one of Mr. Brownlow's friends, and very soon you shall have another.

‘ I forgot to tell you that this island has a numerous population of apes and ourang-outangs, as well as of Dayaks, Chinese Malays, and Dutch. As you go up the rivers you see numbers of them trying to keep up with your boat, clinging to the trees, and performing all sorts of antics.

‘ Some people who visited this island got up a wonderful “traveller's story” about these creatures, and declared them to be a peculiar race of human beings.

'I was out in the woods one day, and came upon an immense old fellow that I know I didn't wish to call any cousin of mine—neither first nor thirty-first. He had a great club in his hand, and was going to climb a tree.

'By-the-bye, our Russian sailor's stories are so very amusing, that Richard and I have been writing them down to send to our friends. I hope that mine will be ready by the time we get another chance of sending letters. We have found out lately, that though he is only a common sailor, yet his father was once a man of some importance, only he got into some scrape with the Government, and was packed off to end his days in Siberia. This young fellow has seen a good deal of the world, and when I go home to see you all, I shall keep you amused for hours with his long yarns, I know.

'But now it is quite time for me to come to an end of this enormous letter, the longest I ever wrote in all my life.

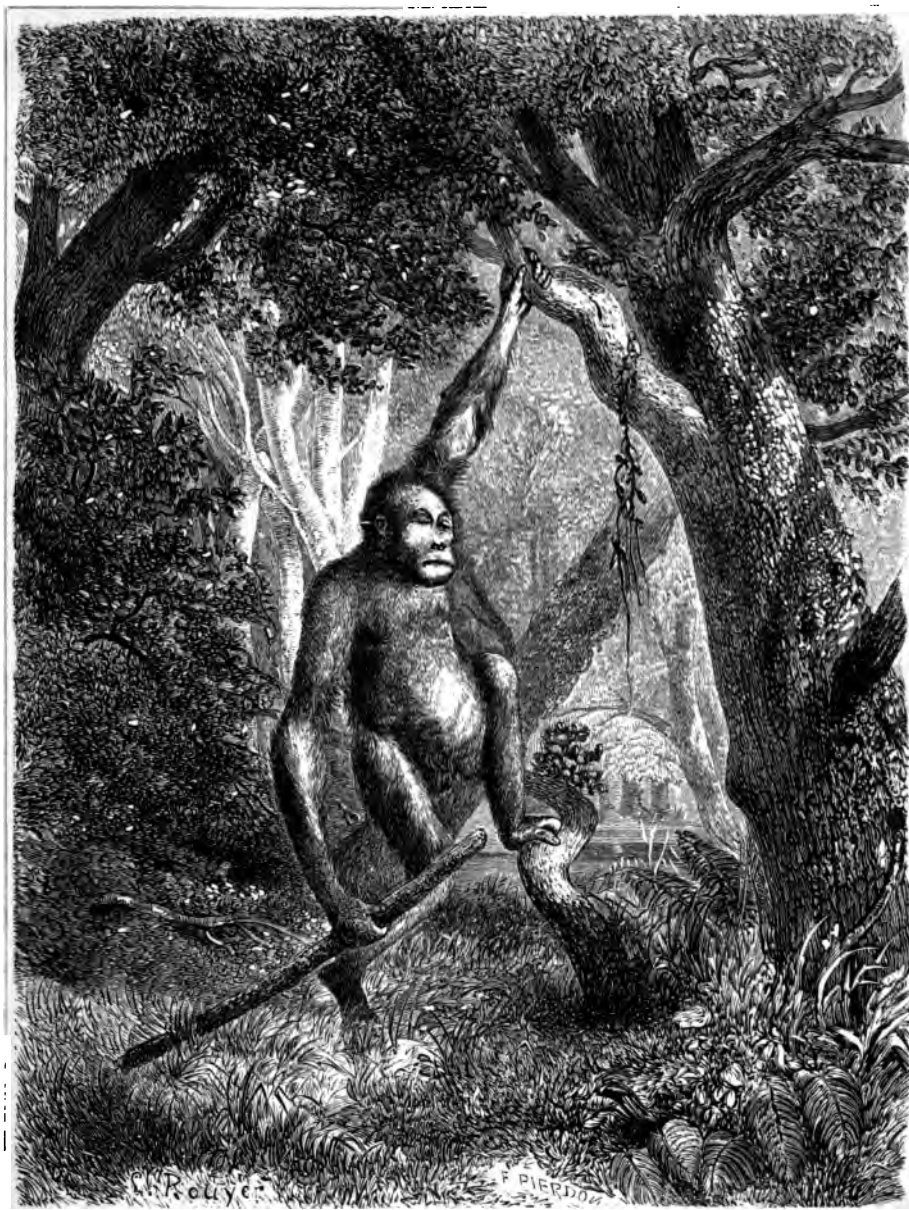
'Give my love to my father, Jane, Kitty, Jessie, and Fanny, and don't forget old Roger, and believe me,

'My dear mother,

'Your affectionate son,

'HARRY.

'P.S.—One of these days I intend to send you home a splendid box of curiosities.'



AN OURANG-OUTANG.

CHAPTER III.

“Now, my lads,” said Alexander Koloff to me and Richard one day, as those two were keeping watch together, and I had been set to work on a part of the rigging in the fore-ship, while Jim the carpenter was busy near us, “it isn’t often we have the chance of being so cosy as this afternoon ; and if you like, I’ll just tell you some of the things that befell me in Siberia, when I was up there looking after my father. You know how he was carried off, away from us all, for some political offence which I never could understand, nor can’t now ; for he was as good a man as ever lived, and more likely to be in the right than those who carried him away.

“Well, it nearly broke my mother’s heart, and ruined us all, as I told you ; but as for me, from the time we lost him I had one idea always running in my head, which was, that somehow or other, by hook or by crook, as you English say, find him I would, and at least know how he was, and where he was. I told my thoughts to my mother, and told her so often, that at last she began to build some hopes upon my fancy, and was ready to let me do anything to bring this discovery about. I was but a small boy then, and we lived at a place only a little to the south-west of the Oural mountains ; and I used to hear how the poor exiles were often carried up the river Obi, and so distributed at different towns in that dreary land. So my plan was to be a sailor, and, if possible, somewhere in those parts.

“I needn't tell you how often I was balked ; how I got on board ships going in wrong directions, and had to try all sorts of dodges to get where I wanted to be at work : you could guess all that. By keeping my eyes and ears open, and picking up information from every one who could give it, at last I learnt a good deal about the places where the exiles were chiefly sent—that they were not all treated alike, and so on.

“It was when I was about eighteen years of age that I found myself exactly in the position I most desired, that is, on board a vessel which was employed to work up and down the great river Obi, and in the sea of the same name. I had got to Tobolsk nobody knows how—by all sorts of ways, and I may say sufferings ; and there I got my berth, that is, on the river Tobol, which afterwards joins the Obi.

“I went up and down that river several times, and as we sometimes stopped for days together at places on its banks, I saw a good deal of the country ; and it being my object to talk to every one I could, I heard more, I dare say, about the ways of the world thereabouts than most strangers would do. Often, too, I met the poor exiles from Poland ; and many's the sorrowful tale I've listened to from old colonels, doctors, architects, and men of all ranks and orders ; ah, and from ladies, too,—and high-born ladies, sometimes : for the poor people forget their rank when they get there, and are only too glad to find any one to talk to who will only listen to them kindly. No doubt they wondered why it was that I, a Russian, should show so much fellow-feeling with them, and perhaps they were surprised that I was not some degrees rougher and more vulgar in my manners than I am : but it would not have been prudent to betray my real circumstances ; and I never did.

“Our vessel was carrying a cargo of corn and other provisions northward, and was to receive in exchange fish and furs; and in order to effect these exchanges, we traded with the different towns on the river.

“One of these was a place called Bérézov, where I was stopping more than once, and on one occasion for more than a week. This town interested me exceedingly, for I had not then been so far northward before; and nearly everything was new to me: besides, it was there that I got the first inkling of the probable whereabouts of the unfortunate parent of whom I was in search, and from scraps of several conversations held with two people into whose company I was thrown, I felt but little doubt that during one part of his exile he had even been living in that very town. But unless you had been on a similar voyage of discovery yourselves, you could but little enter into the state of excitement in which I lived; so I am not going to trouble you with particulars of my search, but only to amuse you with some account of the things and people that I saw.

“Bérézov is not on the Obi, but on a little branch of it called the Sosia. It is a small place, with only about two hundred houses; but it is a busy one, too, at some times of the year, especially when the spring—or, I should say, the summer—comes back, after the long winter, and the trees burst into leaf, and the flowers into blossom, and the ice has broken up, and the river is navigable again. They really have only two seasons in those latitudes, you know; and they jump straight out of the depth of winter into the height of summer: so that one day you will have stoves alight and people going about in their fur dresses, made to fit as tightly as their own skins, and making them look like some kind of animal (only of a different shape from any except monkeys); and the next, perhaps,

the ladies will be dressed in their muslins, and every one revelling in cold drinks or baths.

“This outburst of spring or summer is certainly very splendid and joyous ; and when it comes, the town of Bérézov looks as if there



were some great holiday ; but soon the heat gets as bad to bear as the cold, and you are apt to wish that the sun would take itself off for rather more than a two or three hours' night.

“I could not resist the temptation to try a walk in the woods, which looked so inviting ; but, notwithstanding all my precautions,

the crowds of starving insects that attacked me soon drove me back again, repenting of my presumption.

“ You have heard of the sledges drawn by reindeer during the winter, and useful animals these creatures are ; but they cannot bear heat ; so as soon as the summer comes, every man puts a mark on his own beasts, and sets them free, when they immediately set off to the Oural mountains until the return of winter ; and then they are sure to come back to their proper owners.

“ There are many of the original inhabitants of the country to be met with all round here : they are called Ostiaks, and have still many superstitious customs of their own, though they profess Christianity, and belong to the Greek Church ; of which however, I am free to confess out here, that I don't think much. It has its idols, too, though not of the same kind as the heathen ones. They are a curious people ; and I have seen them in their own huts, which are a great contrast to the houses of some of the rich Russian merchants who now possess the place. In winter the Ostiaks dress much like their conquerors as to their furs ; or, I should rather say, *we* have copied *them*. In summer, the dress of their women is sometimes both fantastic and rich.

“ The first time I went to Bérézov I was struck with the whole look of the town, which stands on the bank of the river, and is encircled with a forest of cedars. Many of the large buildings are painted yellow, which is said to have been a favourite colour of one of our emperors ; and this gives the town a strange appearance.

“ I got to Bérézov just in the end of winter, and saw the spring burst out. Such a sight I never saw before, for the town seemed to break out into one wild song of gladness ; and the change was so extraordinary that it was difficult to believe one's senses.

“ Two days after I arrived a little boy rushed into the house

where I was, in a great state of excitement, and exclaiming, 'A crow! a crow!' disappeared to carry the same news to the rest of the town. A crow is the harbinger of spring: so every one is eager to see the first, and carry the welcome news. This I soon found out.

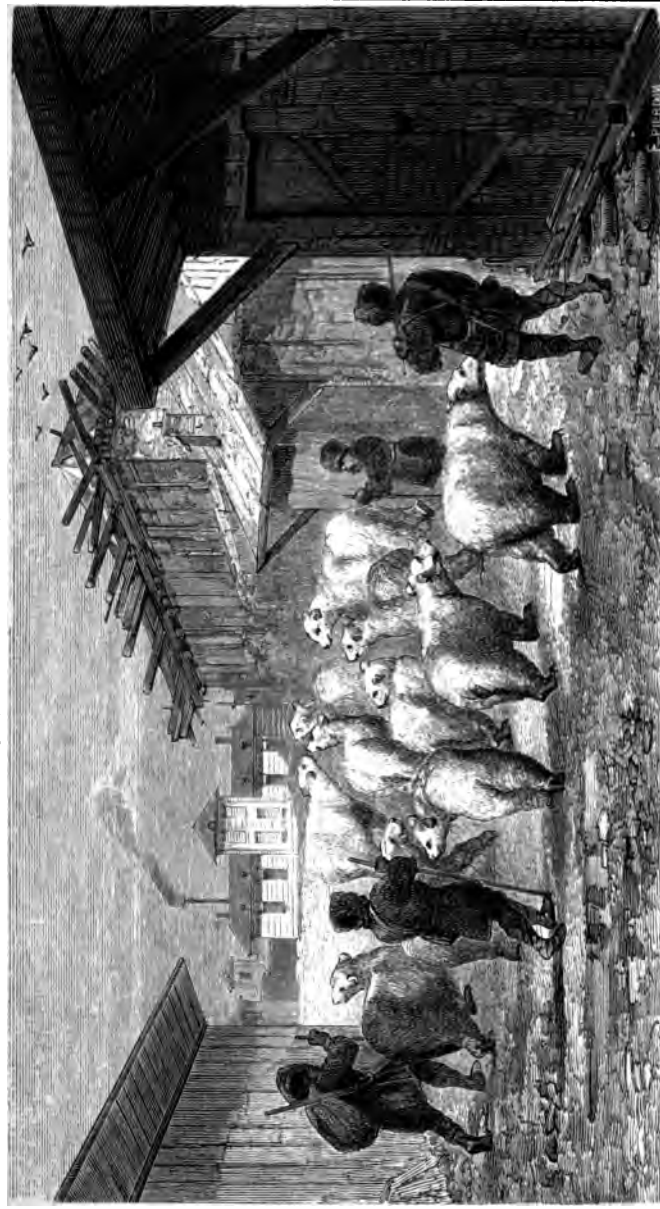
"I once went to a great entertainment at Bérézov; for all ranks are sometimes invited to feasts; and it was amusing to see the stiff way they have of behaving, and the quantity that the people eat. It is not etiquette to make your appearance until you are sent for a second time; nor do you leave till a certain handing round of glasses has taken place, which is the signal for departure. The mistress of the house, whose birthday it was, did it on this occasion; and then we all walked off without even saying good night!

"Then once I saw bears brought to market like a flock of sheep. They were the white polar bears, and seemed quite harmless as they were driven through the streets to be killed, that their skins might be sold for fur. Several men were driving them, but no one seemed afraid of them.

"It is different though with the black bear; for the whole town was thrown into great terror by news which a man brought, who had been out hunting, that he had seen one eating a cow, and every one immediately put his cows into a place of safety, while some of the boldest men in the community prepared to go out and do battle with this common enemy.

"I was rather curious to see a bear-fight; and gladly accepted an invitation to accompany them; for I had nothing to do just then, but hung about on shore, and a love of adventure was becoming a part of my nature.

"We set off armed with pistols, hatchets, and axes, and espe-



BEARS DRIVEN TO MARKET.

cially with a large kind of knife, with a very broad and sharp blade ; and this is the weapon most in use for this purpose.

“ We did not immediately find our prey ; but after going stealthily for some distance in the snow we entered the wood, and at length got a glimpse of some large creature and two little ones, which, however, appeared to me to be nearly white. My companions immediately pressed quietly on, whispering that she would look black enough when the snow was off her.

“ I was armed like the rest, and had been instructed how to proceed should I be the first to meet her ; but it was well that the others were more nimble than me, as it was soon evident that an inexperienced hand would be likely to get a mauling that he would not relish.

“ We were four hunters only in number ; but my three companions were all strong fellows, and knew well what they were about, having, no doubt, killed many a bear before. The youngest of the three now laid aside all his weapons, except his broad-bladed knife, and boldly stepped forward and placed himself directly in front of the old bear, who was quietly enjoying the company of her two rough little ones, and never dreaming of danger. There the fellow stood staring at her, with his knife in his hand ; and the old lady was so taken aback at the sight of him that she actually seemed at first so fascinated that she could not move. But in another minute I saw her suddenly raise herself up on her hind legs, and prepare to throw herself on to the man. But he knew that this was his time ; and, without hesitating an instant, he sprang forward and plunged his knife into the creature's belly. With a loud roar she fell, and then we all rushed upon her and quickly despatched her ; after which we took off the skin, and cut up the flesh for food, and killed the babies too, because we thought it was a pity

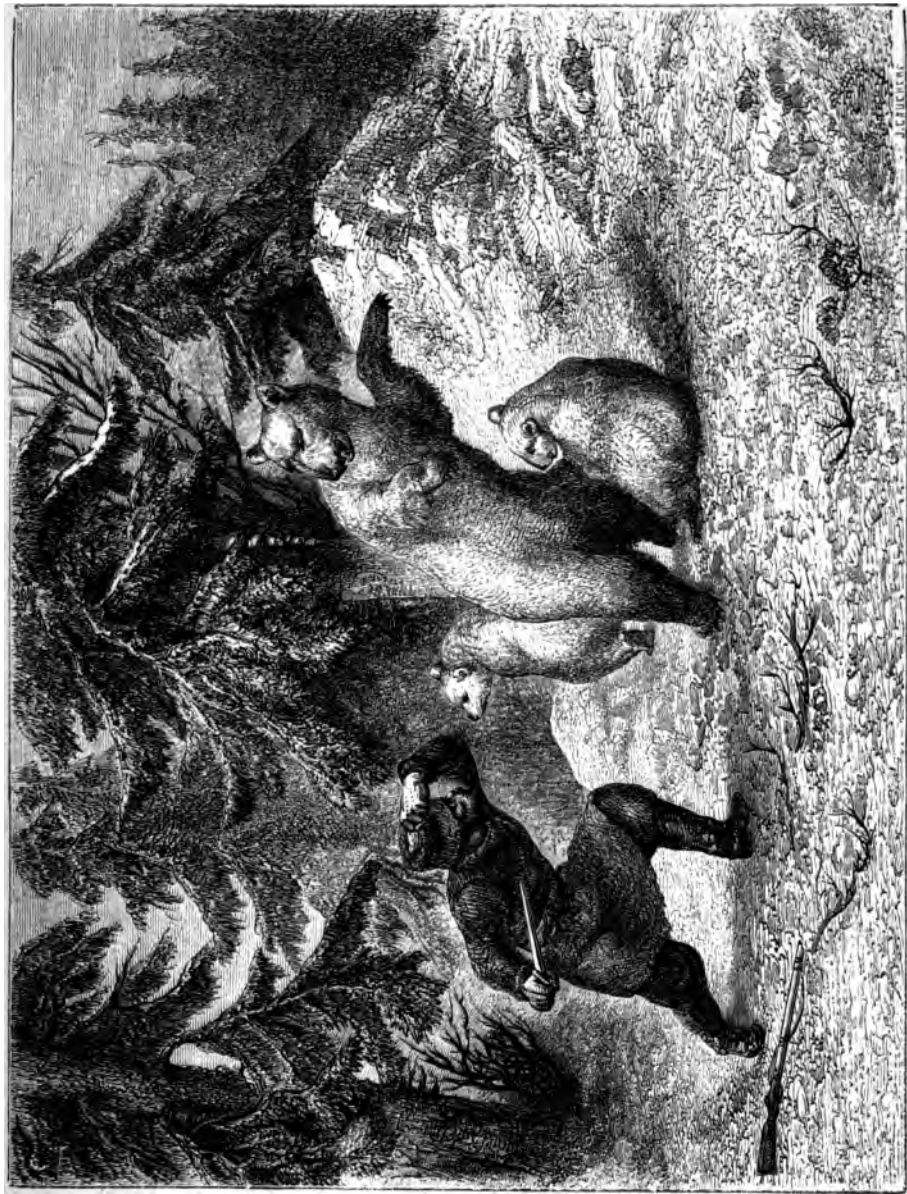
to leave them without a mother to look after them. The Ostiaks, when they kill a bear, cut off its legs and offer them to their own divinities, to propitiate them for any blood they may have shed.

“ I felt myself a sort of hero after this expedition, although I had done nothing in it. But it brought me into some little notice ; and one lady in particular invited me to her house, to give her and her friend an account of the adventure. I soon found that she was not a Bérézovian, but a poor Polish exile, who was glad of any little excitement to turn away her thoughts from her lost home. She was a lady whom you would never forget if you had once seen her ; and I immediately felt sure that I had seen her somewhere before.

“ I told my story, and then she told some of hers, especially the history of her coming here, and of her sufferings on the road ; but she said nothing of her home nor of her children, though she just alluded to having some.

“ It seemed to surprise her that a Russian sailor could be interested in her misfortunes ; but she little guessed that, in addition to the interest which I really felt in her, it was my constant practice thus to enter into conversation with strangers, and that habit had made me so expert in putting my questions that no one who had important secrets would have trusted himself in my company willingly had he known of it.

“ In the course of the narration she happened to mention Tobolsk, and a narrow escape from drowning which she had when just leaving that city. I then discovered how it was that I knew her, for I had seen the accident myself, being on board the vessel at the time, though I left some hours after ; and I surprised her by describing the whole circumstance. She was a lady of a noble family ; so I was told at the time ; and had been torn from her home and



sent into this dreary exile on suspicion only of having favoured the last rising in Poland.

“At Tobolsk, the vessel which was to conduct her to her destination was detained by the severity of the frost, but there she had met with many friends among the exiles stationed in that city; and it was with a desolate heart that she and her one female friend and fellow-sufferer were forced to continue their journey on the breaking up of the frost.

“I saw her myself, early one morning, pushed up the side of the vessel, out of one of the boats, by one of the merchants who were our passengers. As soon as she got on deck she fell down, apparently lifeless, and there was a general cry that the Polish lady was drowned; but she soon revived and assured a Kosak, who was wringing his hands and showing great signs of grief over her, that she was not going to die. She wondered, and so did I, why he gave himself so much concern about a Polish exile; but he soon explained that his life would have paid the forfeit had she died, as no inquiries would be made or explanations received. ‘He ought not to have lost sight of her,’ and that was all that would be known.

“Poor lady! I remembered now hearing her tell how she had risen early and was going on deck, but got driven back by the horrid smells;—how she went back to her cabin, where her friend was still sleeping, and to get a breath of air opened the porthole, and saw just underneath one of the boats, into which she sprang without a thought, and was enjoying the sunshine and light breezes, and feeling as if free once more, when a large wave lifted the boat and the swell carried it away from the vessel. Then, in a moment she felt her danger, tried to push it back, and screamed, but the waves drowned her voice. At last, in despair, she seized the rope, and clung on to something projecting from the ship; when her strength

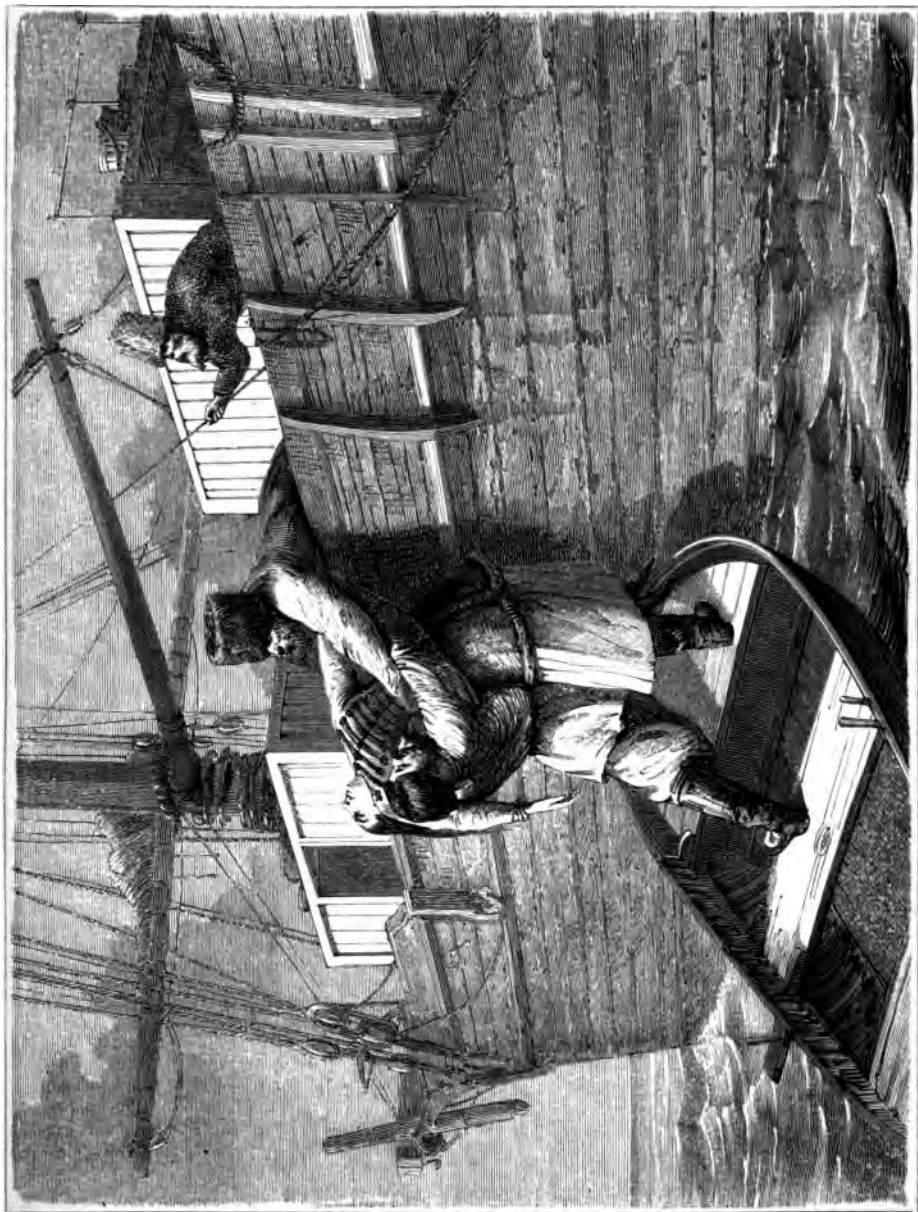
began quite to fail, and had not this merchant seen her and jumped into the boat to her rescue she would have been lost.

“She was a kind-hearted creature, and glad should I have been could I have let her know of how much service she was to me. For it was through something which I had learnt from her that I was at last able to trace out and discover my dear father; and though too late to be of much service to him, yet it was a comfort to him on his death-bed to learn that he had a son who loved him still, in spite of the lapse of time and the disgrace of exile.

“My poor mother, also, was a little comforted when she knew the whole truth, although it confirmed her fears that she was a widow, and I an orphan.

“I felt as if my mission were ended when I had made this discovery; but a love of enterprise has stuck to me ever since, though I sometimes think that the only good of it is to help to amuse my friends.”

‘Alexander’s watch ended here, and so his story broke off. I like him very much, and think you would like him, too; but he has rather a melancholy face.’



THE RESCUE OF THE POLISH LADY.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE had been many and many a howling wind and tempest at Beechwood since Harry's departure—such winds and tempests as his parents thought had certainly never been known before ; and many too had been the wakeful, restless nights, spent in listening to these gloomy sounds. So, when Harry's first letter came, we must leave our readers to imagine the excitement which it caused. It was not written in so good a hand as could have been desired, it is true ; nor was the spelling so perfect as it might have been : yet, with all its defects, it was in his village considered a most marvellous production for 'a boy like that !' But had it been ten times more full of imperfections than it was, it would have been worth its weight in gold, and a good deal more, to one or two, of whom at times he had thought and said very harsh and unkind things.

Scarcely had it gone the round of his relations and friends, when, most unexpectedly, the second packet arrived, containing the story given in the last chapter, and another short letter from himself. The former was read with some degree of interest at home, and more abroad ; but the letter was conned over and over, and cried over and over, too, until the paper was nearly worn out.

'You'd like to hear my Harry's letter ?' had been repeated at last to all the neighbours ; and not till then was it safely treasured up in the mother's desk, to be taken out from time to time, until so many others had been received that these first letters had lost some

small portion of their interest. It was too short to contain much news, but as it is a necessary link in the boy's history, we will just give it here ; though, of course, our readers cannot be expected to read it with Beechwood eyes :—

‘ *Hong-Kong.*

‘ MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

‘ Hurrah ! hurrah ! Here we are at last, in “ the glorious land,” “ the flowery land,” “ the middle kingdom of all the earth,” the country that’s “ under the sky” and “ between the four seas ;” or, in plain English, in the country vulgarly called China by ignorant people like us, who, in some extraordinary way, have got the word from a family who reigned over the land some 2000 or 3000 years ago, and were named Tsin. The Land of Sinim* in the Bible is supposed to mean China : so they tell me. Well, we arrived late yesterday afternoon ; and as a vessel which takes the mail is to leave this to-morrow, I shall not find time to say much more than that.

‘ So far as I see, there isn’t much beauty about the country ; but then, as I haven’t yet landed, you will tell me, as you often did, not to be in a hurry in making up my mind.

‘ But I must say that I was disappointed when I first caught sight of the place, after we had passed “ the Asses’ Ears,” which is a great rock that you see just before you come to Victoria Peak. We came through a lot of little islands of rock, and then we saw the bare, greenish hills, or mountains if you like, of Hong-Kong ; but there were no trees or shrubs to be seen : so it looked barren and desolate.

‘ The harbour though is a fine one, and there is plenty going on in it. They say that the island is quite an English settlement now,

* Isa. xlix. 12.

and that it is full of good houses. Victoria is the name of the chief town ; and there is a Bishop of Victoria, you know. I hope to go ashore soon, and then I shall be able to tell you more about the place : at present, I can only send you a little piece of information that Mr. Brownlow has been cramming into me. You would be so much obliged to him, father, if you only knew how much pains he takes to make me a sensible individual !

‘ Twenty years ago, then, foreigners could not enter China at all ; at least, only a few merchants were suffered to live *outside* Canton. It was much too sacred earth to be trodden by “foreign devils.” Don’t be angry with me for using such language, for I must tell you how very polite they are ; and that as likely as not, if you were here, you would hear yourself called by that pretty name as you walked through the streets. It’s a comfort, though, to think that the pride of these people is being taken down by degrees, and that they are beginning to *feel*, if they won’t *allow* it, that “Britannia rules the waves ;” and that, patient though the good lady is, she won’t take too much sauce.

‘ We’ve had a few little scrimmages, you know, of late years, with the “black-haired race,” as they call themselves ; and, in consequence, the “Celestial Emperor” was condescending enough to make a treaty in 1844, by which the five ports of Canton, Shanghai, Ningpo, Fuh-chau, and Amoy, have been opened to other less civilized races of men, and this little island given up to us English to do as we like in it. Even this is not all ; for, since the last war, he has even been more gracious still, and now agrees to let foreigners travel anywhere about the country, provided they have their passports ! What fun it would be to explore all over it ! But I am afraid I must be content with the sea-coast, as I’m not likely to have such luck as to travel inland.

‘I must just tell you about a visit we had last night, almost as soon as we cast anchor, because I know it will please mother.

‘I mentioned something before about the gentleman who came out in our ship, with his wife and child ; well, he is going to settle here as a merchant, and it turns out that an old friend of his has been a missionary in Hong-Kong for five years : so, no sooner had we dropped anchor, and it was discovered on shore who we were, than off came this clergyman and his wife to welcome their friends to China, and take them back in the boat to Victoria.

‘I saw them meet, and I thought how jolly it must be to have friends ashore ; and then afterwards I overheard the two gentlemen talking about the voyage, and how we managed on Sundays—whether we ever had preaching on board, and so on. Our gentleman seemed to have been very well satisfied—more so than the parson ; for I could hear him saying, when the wind carried his voice my way, “Well, do you think I could ? Would it be allowed ? And, Could you get leave ?”

‘All this time the ladies were in the cabin, getting ready to go ; but soon they came up, escorted by the captain. Then our passenger, Mr. M'Dougall, called him aside and proposed something, to which the captain answered heartily,—“Oh, with all my heart ! with all my heart !” and I, being nearest, was despatched to request Mr. Brownlow to call all hands on deck, because a clergyman wished to say a few words to the men.

‘So, mother, the long and the short of it is, that he gave us a little sermon ; and a very nice one, too, I know you'd have said it was. It brought the water into a good many fellows' eyes, and Mick was delighted about it. If I had time, I think I could have written down more of it than I used to do on Sundays ; but I haven't.

‘It was chiefly about God's mercy in bringing us safely here

through so many dangers ; that we oughtn't to call it "luck," as sailors often do ; and how people that are exposed to storms and accidents as we are ought to think more about being ready to die, instead of less, as they say is generally the case. And he told us *how* we might always be ready, and said a great many things that you would have liked in that part. Old Mick almost made me promise to write it all out for you one of these days ; but I don't know whether I shall be able to recollect it well enough until I find time . . . And then he finished by begging of us all not to be a hindrance to his work among the heathen by behaving as lots of English do.

'There ! you must thank Mick for all that ; and, mother, you wouldn't think so badly of British tars if you knew him.

'I have got an invitation to go and see this missionary some day ; and perhaps I shall.

'You'll get a letter every fortnight now ; so look out.

'Love to everybody.

'Your affectionate son,

'HARRY LAWTON.'

But a fortnight passed—three weeks—almost a month, and no letter came to Beechwood. This was dreadful ! Chinese fevers, shipwrecks, even desertion and disgrace ! all these in turn presented themselves as the possible cause, and haunted the poor mother's mind ; ah ! and his father's, too, only he covered his uneasiness under a cloak of anger against 'the young scamp, who was no doubt enjoying himself, and forgetting how he worried other people. Just like him ! just as he always went on !' so he would run on, much to the chagrin of the whole anxious household of females.

But, in fact, he, like the others, was becoming thoroughly dejected, when one morning a stranger was seen coming through the yard and

approaching, in a doubtful manner, the house-door ; and one of the elder daughters hearing the knock, but not having seen the stranger, was coming from the back of the house to open it, as usual ; but her mother from the parlour called to stop her, and to desire her to let the girl go.

‘I am not sure,’ said the stranger, ‘whether I am right ; but may I ask whether this is Beechwood Farm, and whether Mr. Lawton lives here ?’

‘You are quite right, sir,’ answered Mrs. Lawton, coming forward ; ‘but Mr. Lawton is out at present. If you will have the goodness to step in here and wait a few minutes, my husband will be in shortly ; or if not convenient to wait, perhaps you will leave your message with me.’

‘Thank you,’ answered the young man, who appeared about eight-and-twenty years of age, and in whose appearance there was something that arrested Mrs. Lawton’s attention, though she knew not why. ‘I shall be happy to wait for him, if you will allow me, for I believe that I have had the pleasure of meeting with your husband before, though it was a good many years ago. Your place is altered, ma’am,’ he continued, as he entered the parlour, ‘since I last had the pleasure of passing through this village ; but I remember noticing it then, as uncommonly snug and pretty ; and now it is more than that—it is really beautiful !’

‘My father will be greatly flattered to hear your opinion of it,’ remarked the eldest daughter, as she looked up from her needlework : ‘he thinks that there is no place like Beechwood ; and we all agree with him, I can assure you.’

‘And I,’ replied the stranger, ‘can fully appreciate its charms, coming direct as I do from foreign lands. Yet I dare say,’ he continued, looking rather curiously at her, ‘that even regarding *this*

sweet English homestead there are differences of opinion. People do differ so widely in all their notions of comfort and enjoyment ; and those who have knocked about the world as I have know it so well, that even this would not surprise me.'

The young woman coloured slightly, and seemed rather embarrassed, but answered carelessly,—'Oh, yes ! there are such people in the world, no doubt,' and then bent over her work again ; while her mother, who had an instinctive feeling of having seen this young man before, made an attempt to inquire his name. But, whether designedly or not I cannot tell, he certainly did not seem willing to make this known ; and, without appearing to hear her question, he so adroitly continued his own remarks that she had no opportunity of repeating it.

'You have travelled a great deal, I think I understand you to say,' remarked Mrs. Lawton : 'may I ask in what part of the world, and what country you visited last ?'

'I have seen more than most men of my age, I suppose,' he answered ; 'but not willingly. It was the force of circumstances, and not my own inclination, that drove me abroad. But I was made for a home-bird, and I hope not to be obliged to wander again.

'I have seen both the Americas, and a good deal of each, and I declare I shouldn't like to settle in either of them ; though, no doubt, there are plenty of talent and enterprise at work in many parts, and many a fine spirit to be found among their sons and daughters : and as to the country itself, why, of course, it's rich in natural resources—almost incredibly so, indeed ; but still it had no attraction for me.'

'And have you travelled east as well as west ?' inquired the good woman, with a trembling anxiety which she thought unnoticed.

'Yes ; in many parts of the East, and of the South also,' replied the young man, in an indifferent manner. 'I was in Australia not

very long ago ; but that, again, is all new, fast, and uppish. I like the steady motion of the old world better.

‘In China, perhaps, you would find that?’ chimed in the second daughter. ‘I suppose you would not find the latest Paris fashions there?’

‘Not exactly ; nor in Hindostan either, where I have spent some time—at least, not amongst the native population. The English in Calcutta, though, are not further behind the fashion than they can possibly help, I assure you.’

‘Were you ever in China?’ inquired the mother, pointedly.

‘In China?’ answered the stranger, as if pondering the question. ‘Yes ; I was there some three years ago, and found a good deal to amuse me for the few months I was obliged to remain. I was at Amoy most of the time, and passed a week also at Shanghai.’

Mrs. Lawton’s face expressed the disappointment which she could not conceal, and with a deep sigh she turned the conversation to indifferent topics, while, as Miss Jane thought, the young man regarded her with an expression of compassion.

In less than five minutes more Farmer Lawton himself came in, and to him the strange visitor immediately presented his card, asking at the same time if he remembered him.

‘James Willoughby!’ exclaimed the good man ; ‘and pray what cloud did you drop out of? Why, I haven’t seen you since you were the height of my own boy—the height he was when he left us, I mean ; for you know he has taken to the sea?’

‘I know,’ returned Mr. Willoughby. ‘But don’t you fret about it: he’s getting on very well, Mr. Lawton, I can tell you.’

‘What! have you seen him, then?’ almost screamed the mother and sisters together.

‘Have you seen him *lately*, young man?’ added the father, seizing him by the arm; ‘and is there aught amiss with him?’

‘I saw him just before I left Hong-Kong, and I have come straight from the ship,’ he answered. ‘I left him well and flourishing.’

‘Then why has he served us this trick, and nearly worried his mother ill? He promised to write once a-fortnight; and it’s nearly a month since we heard—the lazy young dog!’

‘My dear sir,’ answered Willoughby, ‘you must not always blame your son, nor even conclude that any harm has come to him, if you do not get a letter each mail; for a thousand things may prevent one from reaching you at the proper time: as, for instance, the ship which is bringing it may be delayed or lost. But in this instance I must say that it is partly Harry’s fault; that is, he trusted to my sailing some days before I did, and therefore thought it not worth while to write his letter, as he said I could tell everything more fully. But you must not be angry with him this time, my good sir; for when he found out his mistake he was really very vexed, and gave me his solemn promise never again to miss a mail.’

‘Which promise he will keep until he breaks it,’ rejoined the father, in a relenting tone.

‘I can only say, that if ever he does break it to my knowledge, I have promised him that I would cross the seas again on purpose to box his ears,’ answered Willoughby, laughing.

‘Well, never mind that now, Peter,’ said Mrs. Lawton; ‘do let’s us hear all about him. But why didn’t you tell us all this while, Mr. Willoughby? Here, you’ve been keeping me on thorns. Oh, the dear boy! and is he quite well, and getting on nicely?’

‘Extremely well, as far as I can judge,’ answered the young man; ‘and I saw him nearly every day for about three weeks. His

captain says he rather kicked at first against ship discipline ; but that he's a very good lad now, and coming on wonderfully.

‘ I arrived in Hong-Kong the very day after “ The Gazelle ” dropped her anchor in its harbour ; and it so happened, that very shortly after I met your Harry in the street. But as I left England when he was, I believe, about two years old, we might have met a hundred times, and been none the wiser, had not a friend of mine previously informed me that the son of my father's old friend, Mr. Lawton, was one of the crew of the vessel which we were both admiring, and given me such a description of his personal appearance that I knew him in a minute ; and using a liberty which, happily, we may take abroad, I walked straight up to him, and mentioned his name. A few words of explanation seemed to satisfy him ; for he was overjoyed to find anything in the shape of a friend. His ship had brought out a large, heavy cargo ; and being a young hand I suppose that, during the time occupied by mercantile transactions, he can be better spared than would be the case were he more experienced : or else the captain, whom I slightly knew, was very good-natured both to him and me ; for he gave him an excellent character, and leave to spend a good deal of time with me during my stay there.

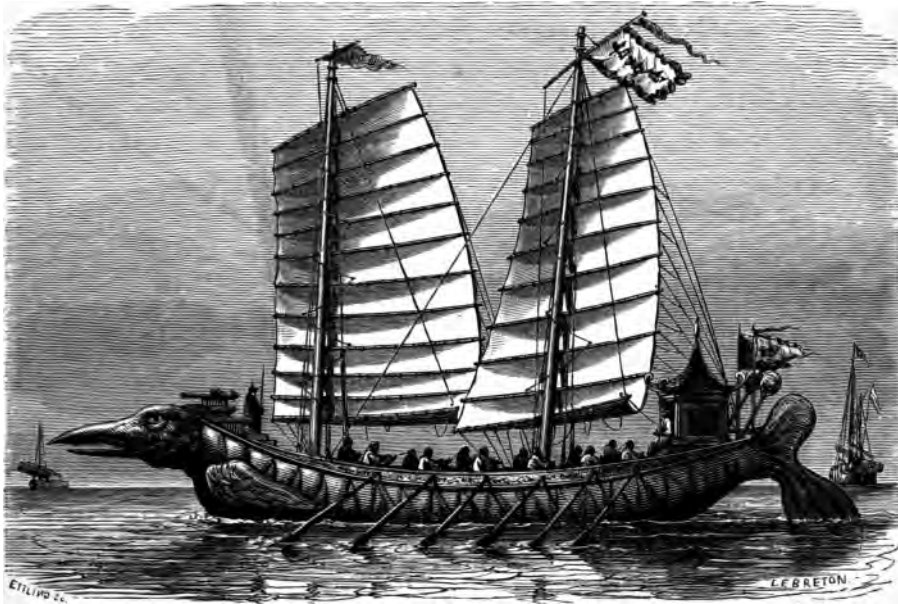
‘ Well, now,’ said Mr. Lawton, ‘ just sit still, and tell us what you did, and what you saw while you were together.’

‘ With all my heart,’ replied Mr. Willoughby ; ‘ that is just what your son asked me to do.’

‘ First, we walked about the city of Victoria and tried to discover what there was to be seen in it ; and then we strolled along the harbour, and looked at all the shipping, chatting between whiles about you and others. There were a great many Chinese boats floating about, which were all comfortably fitted up with neat bamboo-work inside ;

and there were also several large junks, which are heavy, clumsy-looking things, with very high sterns, and sails made of a kind of matting, and great hideous eyes painted in the bows.

‘Of course I had seen plenty of them before, but Harry hadn’t, and I liked to see his eagerness about everything connected with his profession. He spent a good deal of breath in abusing “the great hideous things,” which they certainly are, but was equally enthu-



siastic in his admiration of some of the other vessels in the harbour. There were sixty or seventy, English, French, Dutch, and Yankee ; which will give you some idea what kind of place Hong-Kong is.

‘It has its curious sugar-loaf mountain, its English cathedral, 70,000 inhabitants, among whom are many rich merchants, and plenty of good houses. But I was not likely to stop in China long ;

and so I was anxious to visit other parts that are more thoroughly Chinese: besides, I had business in Canton, which stands on the right bank of the Choo Kiang, or Canton river, and is only a few miles from its mouth. Hong-Kong, you know, is just opposite the mouth; and, while I think of it, I ought to tell you that Kiang means "river."

'Well, it so happened that Captain Briggs also intended to visit Canton in the course of a few weeks, for purposes of business, and he was rather glad of the opportunity of making some preliminary arrangements through your son, who, you see, is gradually becoming an important personage. So, no time was lost about it. The very next day we got on board what is called a native "fast boat," and soon found ourselves gliding away through the multitude of ships of all nations which fill up the whole of what is called the "Whampoa Reach."

'Your Harry was in great spirits: he is a very jolly fellow, made to enjoy everything he sees, and to admire everything.'

'Except his own home,' interrupted Mr. Lawton.

'Ah, well, you must forgive him for that,' returned Willoughby, 'though it was very provoking of him, certainly. We must hope he'll grow wiser in time. Indeed even now, I think, you would perhaps be surprised to hear him describe it.'

'I was going to say, that as we approached Canton, and passed numbers of beautiful paddy-fields, plantain-trees, orange-groves, bamboo-fences, and gardens, all backed by hills which were cultivated to the very tops in terraces, with pagodas and native houses dotted among them, he was telling me that he was changing his mind already about Chinese scenery, which, at first, he thought very ugly; and I was amusing myself with chaffing him about his likes and dislikes, when we heard a loud beating of gongs and discharge of

fireworks, and suddenly found ourselves in the midst of a large population, who appeared to live in their boats. There seemed to be literally a town on the river; and this turned out to be really the case: so that the children actually wear hollow gourds round their waists in case they should tumble into the water!

‘We soon landed, and found so much to look at that we had no time to talk; for it is an extraordinary place, and full of extraordinary things and beings.

‘Round the outside of the city there is certainly a broad space for the factories; and there are two or three tolerably wide streets, called Old China Street, New China Street, Curiosity Street, &c.; but the rest of the city is one mass of such narrow lanes that I don’t believe Europeans could live in them: yet the natives are packed together so tightly that more than a million people live within these walls.

‘The business streets are lively enough, though rather monotonous, as each consists only of one kind of shops—all tailors, for instance, or all lantern-makers; but then there are no windows, and the counter is across the front of the house, which is open to the street, so that it is like being in a market; and the Chinese are sharp hands at money matters, and keep things going.

‘The streets of dwelling-houses, on the contrary, are the most gloomy affairs in the world, and look like nothing but two long walls with doors in them at intervals.

‘However, we had business at one of these houses, so that we were able to see the inside of it. We were taken through a long passage to the reception-room, which, I must tell you, is only meant for gentlemen; as the ladies receive their visitors in their own bed-rooms, and, of course, receive ladies only.

‘All the rooms look out into a sort of court at the back of the

house ; that is, the windows are all on that side : but they are filled up with white paper, or thin oyster-shells, not glass ; so that no one can see into the rooms, even from the court. So young Harry and I were ushered into the grand room, called the "ting ;" which, if it had only been clean, would not have made a bad drawing-room. There was no carpet, certainly, for they don't patronize that article of furniture ; but here there happened to be some matting, which is sometimes used. Chairs and couches were arranged round the room against the wall, and we took our seats on two of them *as they stood* ; for no one moves a chair out of its place in China. Against the wall hung a good many pictures, some of which were native water-colour drawings ; and into the doors painted glass was introduced, while numerous pieces of sculpture, placed in various niches, testified to the taste of their possessor. There were also beautiful porcelain vases, and an English clock ; for, with all their skill, the Chinese do not succeed in this line. The room was ornamented, also, like the passage, with gay-coloured paper lanterns, of which showy affairs they make great use, though they also burn tallow candles, and have horn lamps.

' There was a large divan, covered with pillows, at one end of the room, and numerous costly and beautiful cabinets about the house ; so that one would say that it was a superbly furnished mansion. The gentleman to whom it belonged was a rich native merchant, and a man, I suppose, who would be considered handsome in China, as he was very fat, had small eyes, and a long pigtail ; all which peculiarities are admired in men in the "flowery land." I don't think they like fat women so well. These fellows are always very polite, you know, in their own way, and on formal occasions ; so Mr. Yung Nang, who, we were informed, is a very good specimen of a Chinaman, took care to pay us both the compliment of inquiring what

were our "honourable names," and our "venerable ages;" for which question I was prepared, and answered in the approved fashion, speaking of our names as "poor," and of the places of our birth as "mean:" but I assure you, that the choking chuckle which I heard in my companion's throat while this was going on quite alarmed me.

'Mr. Yung Nang also remarked, as is proper, that our coats were made of very good materials, and had no doubt belonged to our grandfathers; which remark tickled Harry even more than the former.'

'But how did you carry on the conversation?' asked Mrs. Lawton, laughing.

'Oh, of course, it was conducted through an interpreter; and afterwards Mr. Yung Nang kindly offered to show us anything that we particularly wished to see in the city: an offer which we gladly accepted. Harry will, no doubt, write to you about what we saw; and I expect his letter will be a lively one, for sight-seeing is new to him. He is neither sick of seeing nor of describing, and will communicate the charm of his own enthusiasm.

'Of course we had to get into sedan-chairs, for Chinamen cannot imagine the pleasure of walking if one can ride; and we were obliged to do as they do in China while in our friend's company: so we lost a good deal. Horses don't seem to be used as beasts of burden there, but people are borne by bearers in these chairs; and other weights are slung on a pole, no matter how heavy they may be: so that sometimes you see as many as twenty men bearing one burden, and all calling out "Ha, ho! He, ho!" that they may lift together. We passed some on our way to the Buddhist temple that day, to which he got us admitted, being himself a follower of Buddh.

‘I must not forget also to tell you that this very civil gentleman invited us to an entertainment at his house, which neither of us was disposed to decline. There was plenty of variety in the dishes ; and we exercised our ingenuity in trying to discover what sort of creatures we were eating ; but everything was so disguised in oil, and mixed with garlic and spices, that it was hard to make out.

‘However, I know that a particular kind of frog, called a “field fowl,” is eaten in Canton ; as also kittens, and one sort of dog that is fed on rice, but it is not true that they eat rats and mice. Sharks’ fins and sea-slugs are used for food, and they make soup of a kind of swallows’ nest. But the thing that they like best of all is pork ; which comes up at every meal, till a European loathes it. All our common vegetables are eaten, and also the root of the water-lily ; but they don’t like milk, beef, butter, or cheese ; and they scarcely drink any beer, wine, or brandy. Opium, you know, is what they smoke ; and it is as great an evil in China as gin-drinking is in England.

‘We were both considerably puzzled how to manage with our chopsticks, things that you use with one hand ; but, anticipating this difficulty, I had taken the precaution of bringing a couple of knives and forks, which we soon produced, and requested leave to use ; and they seemed to afford the company as much amusement as their chopsticks did to us. Little pieces of silver paper were constantly distributed during this meal—in place of table-napkins, I suppose.

‘I had contrived to overawe your mischievous son before we entered the house this time ; for it is dangerous to trifle with a Chinaman’s dignity ; but when the little children were introduced, and all the boys appeared with their short pigtails, I feared again for his gravity.

‘Girls as well as boys come in to see their father’s guests while

they are very little ; and they are also taught with their brothers ; but afterwards they are confined to the women's apartments, and, generally speaking, their education is stopped short.

‘They do not have their heads shaved, for women do not wear tails, but dress their hair rather becomingly to my taste : it is turned back from the face and fastened up in a large knot at the back ; and through this knot young ladies who are betrothed wear a large silver pin, which answers to an engagement-ring among us. All women wear bright bands of velvet or flowers, which look well in their dark hair.

‘They are kept very much secluded, but not as Hindoo ladies are. For instance ; while we were chatting with this gentleman, something was brought in by bearers and set down in the middle of the room, which, on being uncovered, turned out to be his wife !

‘The little lady was introduced to us as such, and, after saluting us with some degree of grace and dignity, she was borne away again in the same manner.

‘I have caught sight of ladies *walking* when they believed themselves unobserved ; and they do this most curiously. Indeed it must require some practice to walk on such little feet at all, and they have to balance themselves by swaying from side to side, with something like the motion of a sailing-vessel. But this motion is admired. All the Chinese, both men and women, dress in rich materials, and have a variety of dresses for different occasions. So our host left us after dinner for a short time, and when he reappeared he was attired in a sort of brown satin robe, with a brocaded purple vest.

‘The men when they go abroad wear large round hats ; but the women have a sort of band of velvet round their foreheads, which these people think more of protecting from the heat of the sun than the backs of their heads.’

‘You haven’t told us anything about the religion of the country, Mr. Willoughby,’ said Miss Lawton; ‘but I hope that, if our brother has fallen into the company of a missionary, he will not remain quite uninterested about that. I have heard that there are 360,000,000 of people in China; and surely English people ought to feel more interest in doing good to their souls than in amusing themselves with their curious ways. I wish Harry might think of that.’

‘It will not be Mr. Foster’s fault if he doesn’t, I should say, from what I saw and heard of him,’ answered the young man. ‘But he was telling us one day that the Chinese are the most atheistical people in the world, and seem not to care the snap of their finger whether they have souls or not, or if they have, what becomes of them after death. And I heard another clergyman, who had worked some years among them, also remark, that “you might talk to a Chinese for an hour about the man in the moon, what he eats and what he drinks, and he would listen to you with his mouth open; but if you begin to speak to him about his own soul, heaven or hell, God and a Saviour, he would politely assent to anything you assert and go to sleep.”

‘They are a hard-headed, cold-hearted, money-loving people, there can be no doubt; yet, for all that, a good number of missionaries, English and American, have patiently laboured among them; and I was informed lately, that in Amoy alone there are now more than six hundred Christians.

‘But you were asking about the religion of the country; and I heard something on the subject from various people, as well as from Mr. Foster himself, one evening, which your brother and I spent at his house. He told us that there are three religions in China—Buddhism, Confucianism, and the religion of Laotse.

‘Buddha is supposed to have lived several centuries before the

Christian era, and to have set himself up as the reformer of Hindoo and Chinese superstitions. He has had more followers than perhaps any other founder of a false religion. The Buddhists have temples and bonzes, or priests, but no caste like the Hindoos. Their highest hope is, in time, to become absorbed into Buddh ; or, in fact, annihilated ! for it comes to that. The Chinese call this the religion of Fo, a corruption of Buddh.

‘ Confucius is followed chiefly by the learned ; and the Emperor calls himself the patriarch of this system, which is more a philosophy than a religion. It has neither temples nor priests.

‘ Laotse lived about the same time as Confucius ; but his system takes in lesser gods, demons, and genii, and is therefore more adapted to attract the common people, by whom only it is followed. All these systems, you see, are cold and lifeless ; and no doubt have had a great deal to do with making the people what they are.

‘ I must say, however, that they have their good points—one of which is, that they show immense respect to parents. The Emperor calls himself, you know, “ the father of his people ; ” but even he is obliged to kneel to his mother. They are also very persevering and industrious, and certainly ingenious.

‘ Harry instructed me to tell you about these matters, because, he said, you would be sure to ask questions about them, and he wanted not to have to write about anything but what he saw and could understand.

‘ So now he is free to do so,’ added Mr. Willoughby, rising ; ‘ and as for me, it is time that I took my leave.’

This, however, was not to be thought of by the hospitable Mrs. Lawton, who insisted that he should stay and take dinner with them ; after which he was easily persuaded to accompany the

farmer in his rounds over his fields ; and then, of course, he was obliged to return to tea.

When the young man did take his leave, it was with the request that he might be allowed to come now and then to inquire after his young friend, and learn if he kept his promise about writing. Then Mr. Lawton was highly offended that his old friend's son should be so stiff and ceremonious as to ask such a thing ; and, in short, from that day forward Willoughby was a very constant visitor at Beechwood Farm, and became a favourite with every member of the family. To his great delight Harry's next letter came most punctually, and the tone of it pleased him as much as his own family. It was addressed this time to his eldest sister, and ran thus :—

‘ Canton.

‘ MY DEAR JENNY,

‘ I am not staying at Canton, though I finish this off there and put that address ; for I sleep most nights on board “ The Gazelle.” But I have been here backwards and forwards a good deal ; and since the friend left, who, I suppose, by this time you have seen, Mr. Brownlow has often been with me. He knows China very well ; or rather, I should say, some parts of it ; for it's a large country, you know, and divided into eighteen great provinces : so, no one can be expected to know it all.

‘ Of course you have heard of the great wall that goes all round China, and was built to keep the Tartars out. Well, it didn't keep them out, for they got in and conquered the country : so now Tartars and Chinese live together ; only they don't mix much to this day, though they jog on somehow, and don't seem to quarrel so much as one would think ; only they keep as separate as they can, and seldom intermarry. Canton is divided between the two

racés ; and one good thing about the Tartars is, that they don't double up the girls' feet and make them cripples for life, like the others. I have seen lots of queer things since Willoughby left, and one which I must tell you about while I think of it. It was the model of a British flag-ship which was engaged in some attack on the Chinese forts that didn't succeed. These fellows are good at modeling ; and I suppose the man thought he would rather have a copy of a vessel that didn't conquer than of one that did.

' It was capitally done ; every bit of it just like, even to the fellows in their blue jackets leaning over the gunwale, smoking their pipes. But when I tried to read the name on the side I thought I should have laughed myself into a fit. What do you think it was ? Why, "BASS&Co'sPALEALE," all written in one long word ! It was thought that the fellow could not make out the name on the flag-ship, and so picked up this off some bottle, and copied it instead. That's just like them, though : they do everything without a reason.

' I don't like them at all ; they are so horridly conceited, and such abominable cheats.

' Why, the whole country is full of shams ! I saw a grave the other day on a mountain side, where the relations were pretending to offer sweetmeats and all sorts of good things to the dead man ; but we happened to turn round and look behind us soon afterwards, and, lo and behold, they were carrying them all off again, to be eaten at their own suppers !

' We went into a temple with Mr. Yung Nang, and saw, as we thought, some boots, clothes, and valuable things, being burned, that were said to have belonged to a man lately dead ; but when we went a little closer they were only shams made in paper !

' And then they are such disgustingly dirty people ; and they

wear their finger-nails such a length that they look like claws—nasty creatures! Why, do you know, short nails here show that any one is a servant, and has hard work to do!—ladies, I believe, wear theirs nobody knows how long; and gentlemen only cut them on their right hands. I believe they are very cruel, too—both the laws and the people; though the Emperor does call all Chinese his children.



‘For some crimes men are cut up into little pieces; for others, they are ground between two millstones: but those are sights that I haven’t seen, I am happy to say.

‘I once saw a man in a cask; and people said he was a thief. It seems a common way of punishing thieves; and it is more painful than you would think at first. You see, they take the fellow and



stuff him into this cask, with his head through a hole in the top, and his two hands through holes in the sides ; so he can never lie down and never move without carrying the thing with him : and he is exposed to the sun, and must be starved, unless some one is good enough to feed him ; for he can't help himself. The man that I saw had a month of it, and looked so bad ! It makes me sick to think of him. I saw another thief, with one foot and one hand put through holes in a wooden frame ; and one policeman was dragging him along by a chain fastened round his neck, while another was thrashing him all the time ! I suppose he deserved to be punished ; but English people couldn't look on and see human creatures tormented so coolly as these wretches do.

‘ It's well Mr. Foster, the missionary, doesn't see this, though ; for he always cuts me short when I begin to run on against the Chinese, by asking me if I should have been any better if I had been brought up as they have. Well, I suppose not ; at any rate, I shouldn't like to have had to go to a Chinese school.

‘ I went to see one once ; and there were all the boys standing each at his desk, listening while the master read a few words over to them. Then they said the same words over after him till they could say them properly ; for the stupid thing is, that the language in which the books are written is not the one they speak ; and so the children can't even say them right at first. When they can, then they all sit down and chant them over in a sing-song way all together, till they know them by heart, when each child goes up to say his lesson : but I don't know what you'd say if you saw them, Jenny ; for when they repeat the lesson they actually stand with their backs to the master ! There is no alphabet in their language at all : so there's another queer thing for you !

‘ They have characters, not letters ; and each character means

a word : so you see they have to learn every word separately, and there are about four thousand in common use.

‘ The first reading-book is called “ The Three-character Classic,” because the words are arranged three in a column ; and the poor things have to learn this through without understanding a word of it, for the first time they read it, it is never explained.

‘ A man is thought well educated if, in ten years, he can read the nine chief books. Just think of that ! It shows though what a plodding set they are, that, in spite of all this drudgery, there are so many students among them. But, then, they get their rank and places under government by passing examinations. They become mandarins in that way ; and mandarins are not only gentlemen ; they are magistrates also.

‘ Mr. Foster says that the Christians try a different plan in their schools, and write books for them in the *spoken* language. At Ningpo some have been even written in English letters. But it is a hard language at best ; and people must work hard either to learn it or to read it. I know I’m glad enough I haven’t got to do either one or other !

‘ If I were to ask you now what are the things that you get from China, you would answer, I expect, “ Tea and silk :” and so, I suppose, you want me to tell you something about them.

‘ Well, I believe that they both come more from the north than hereabouts ; but I have seen a tea-tree now ; and it’s about the size of a gooseberry-bush. After it is three years old the leaves are picked four times a-year, and then dried, partly in the sun and partly in an iron pan over a wood or charcoal fire. The rolling and drying of the leaves takes a long time ; yet even people who have only little gardens cultivate tea-trees, and men often walk hundreds of miles with boxes of tea slung over their backs for sale.

They have tea-shops in the towns, where people go in for a cup of tea and a little chat ; which is better than going into an English public-house, I should think. They say that you can't taste any tea in England so good as you get in China ; because, when it's fresh, the flavour is more delicate. There are many tea-trees on the hills south of the Yang-tze river ; and in the valleys below rice is cultivated.

‘ Mr. Brownlow told me about that, for he has seen many rice-fields. It will only grow in water, you know ; so in each field is a water-wheel, worked either by men, with hands or feet, or by an ox. A tree is planted to shade this ox from the sun : that is one good point about these people ; they certainly are kind to animals. I will say that for them.

‘ The field is soaked with water, and the rice planted only in one corner, from which it is planted out when it is four inches high, and the field well watered.

‘ The north of China is one great plain, with lots of rivers and canals. Along the banks of these canals are plenty of young mulberry-trees, which are used for rearing silkworms ; but the creatures don't crawl all over them like caterpillars, as, I dare say, you think they do. The leaves are stript off and carried in boats to the places where the silkworms are kept ; and it is in spring that they come out of their eggs. Then a kind of bean grows in this same part of the country, which is used to make oil for cooking and for lamps. And cotton grows on the same ground after the beans are gathered : so, you see, it is a fertile land. Now, you'll want to know about the cotton plant, of course, Miss Jane, inquisitive creature as you always were !

‘ I must tell you, then, that it is a low shrub, with a pretty pale yellow flower, that has a purple eye to it. The pod bursts open

when it is ripe, and then you see a ball of cotton covering the seeds, which is separated from them by a wooden wheel, and spun and woven by countrywomen.

‘The rice and cotton both look very beautiful growing, they tell me ; and so I hope I may get a chance of seeing them one of these days : but this is what Mr. Brownlow has been describing to me.

‘There are not many large trees, at any rate, in the north of China ; but lots of willows along the rivers, which you would admire, I know. There are two great trees, though, that I must tell you about,—the Banyan, and the Bamboo. You may have heard about the Indian Banyan ; but this is not quite like it. That sends down branches which take root, and so form a grove very soon. But this one’s branches only hang down like ropes, and don’t often reach the ground. The Bamboo-tree is very beautiful and graceful ; and more than that, it is one of the most useful trees in the world.

‘It grows in groves, and sometimes covers hills ; and yet each one answers almost every conceivable use.

‘It grows very tall, with a straight trunk, and the boughs all on the top ; and these boughs are slender, with narrow leaves of a delicate green, which wave like feathers in the wind. I saw one just lately. The trunks are used for furniture, poles, and many purposes ; buckets can be cut out of large ones, cups out of little ones. The boughs are jointed like grass, and can be twisted or plaited into many different articles. By putting a red-hot iron into the hollow trunk the pith can be destroyed, and then it serves for a water-pipe. Ribs of bamboo are used to strengthen sails ; hats and baskets are woven of it ; stuffing for cushions and mattresses, handles of pens, ribs of umbrellas, frames and poles of sedan-chairs, and barrels of organs,—all these things are made out of it ; and the leaves are

used for making cloaks for country people, and to thatch houses, while young shoots of it are used for vegetables. So, there's a tree for you! Shall I bring you one home, Miss Jenny?



‘ But I must not forget to tell you of something I saw the other day. It was an ingenious way of saying a great many prayers, invented, I suppose, by the Buddhist bonzes, who are something like

the Roman Catholics, I think, in a good many things. They have their monasteries, their images, and their ways of torturing themselves, which they think very good; and they seem to fancy that prayers are valued by *number*, and that feeling has nothing to do with them. I mean, that they don't pray because they want anything, but just because they think their prayers are a kind of good works.

'So they have invented "a praying-mill," and they stick slips of paper into it, on which are printed prayers; then they turn the mill and count the number, I believe, according to the turns. Now isn't that what you call a sham and a cheat? If it isn't, I don't know what is.

'We have just been holiday-making in the city; for the New Year is *always* holiday time. It is almost the only holiday that poor schoolboys get.

'Then the people *clean* their houses, put up new prayers and mottos, shut all their *shops*, let off fireworks, and make their offerings of gilt paper in the *temples*.

'The first day of the year they stay at *home* with their families, enjoying themselves and listening to the music. *Oh*, such music! Somebody says it is like six Scotch pipers playing no tune in particular, but each trying to drown the others!

'Besides, this is the time for sending presents to one's friends. I saw coolies carrying tables turned upside down, and filled with roast meat and cakes, being taken to different people's houses as presents.

'The second day, and the third, every one goes visiting, and leaving their red visiting-cards, with the kind wish written on it,—
"May you have children, rank, and a long life!" *Oh*, and I forgot, they burn their "Kitchen God" at this time of year, or rather a day or so before, and then they think he goes up to heaven to

give in his report of their conduct, and comes back on New-year's Day, when they hang up a new picture of him.

' The first new moon is the feast and procession of lanterns, which is a grand affair ; and though I can't see the meaning of it, it seems to amuse them.

' I forgot to tell you another funny thing about the ways in this country ; which is, that if you go to stay at a friend's house you are expected to take your own bedding. But then, in summer, they don't use either mattresses or feather-beds ; as they sleep only on sacking covered with a kind of matting. In winter, I believe, they have a thin mattress and a sort of square bolster. They don't make their beds as we do, but take off the clothes and fold them up in the daytime. However, as they do everything in just the opposite way to ours, I might write for ages, I think, before I had told you all.

' They keep on their hats in the house, begin to read at the end of their books, wear white at funerals, and dress their brides in scarlet !

' And now, Miss Jane, you can't say that I haven't sent you an instructive letter ; and I hope you'll be content for a bit, because I see my next letters must be about other things, as father and mother ask so many questions that it will take a good while to answer them.

' I was very glad to get your packet of letters ; and mind you keep your word now about writing, or else I shan't keep mine ; that's all.

' Tell Willoughby to write, too ; and give my love to him, as well as to all at home.

' Your madcap brother,

' HARRY.

' Fanny sent me a scrubby letter ; won't I pay her out ?'

CHAPTER V.

THE Lawton family began gradually to feel much more reconciled after this to Harry's absence, and to his seafaring life. He seemed to be doing well, and likely to turn out a creditable member of his profession ; which, as even his father could not help allowing, was better than the case would have been had he stayed to grow up only a stupid or careless farmer. Had he made up his mind to give himself heartily to his father's employments and pursuits, and to be his right hand, he would, no doubt, as an only son and brother, have soon become the stay and prop of the whole family, and necessary to the comfort and happiness of every member of it. But this happiness he had deliberately declined ; and though no one could quite take Harry's place in his parents' hearts, yet in other respects it was really open to any one who should prove himself fit to occupy it. Letters went and came as punctually as could possibly be expected ; and there was every reason to think that Mr. Willoughby had formed a correct estimate of Harry's principal friends and companions, which was decidedly a favourable one.

' Nor was it a small thing, he said, for a boy to be taken up by so right-minded a man as the first mate, and to meet with so much kindness from an earnest, devoted clergyman, like Mr. Foster, just when, for the first time in his daily life, he was necessarily thrown into contact with such English persons as are usually to be

met with in all those Eastern cities, where gain is almost the only attraction, and with those foreigners and natives whose influence must be most pernicious.'

I do not, however, purpose to lay all these letters before my readers, for the simple reason that, as he himself hinted in his last, they were for some time chiefly of a personal or private character, containing many particulars about his companions and friends, which he certainly never intended to be laid before the public, interesting though they often were to those at home. Indeed, on consideration, I think that, in order to avoid tediousness, it will be better now to select one written not long before his return home, because in this one he has thrown together a good many details which may prove entertaining to those interested in the country, and it is written in a somewhat less boyish style than the preceding ones. It was addressed to his father, and dated from

‘ *Nanking.*

‘ When first I landed in China, ever so long ago, my dear father, I didn’t think that I should be sitting down now to write to you in a city which was the capital of the empire before Peking, and which is now the capital of the leader of the great rebellion, who calls himself “The Heavenly King.”

‘ I wonder when and how this civil war will end! People, both in England and here, hoped much from it at first, they say, because the state of things under the Mantchow dynasty was so thoroughly rotten that any revolution seemed to promise improvement. But, so far as I can make out, nothing has come of it yet, except war and bloodshed, famine, and distress of every kind; for the one party is as cruel as the other; and it seems to matter little whether the mandarins or the rebels take a town, as cruelties of the most horrible description, and often great massacres, are the common

results. I have learnt this in Nanking, where one sees the ruin the Taipings have caused.

“The Heavenly King,” as he blasphemously calls himself, professes it to be his mission to clear the land of idols and Tartars. He has eight kings under him, and wherever they go they destroy the temples and break the idols’ noses. He once learnt something of Christianity from some missionaries; and I dare say they hoped that he would turn out better than he has; but when I tell you that he thinks that he has been to heaven, and that he sees visions and believes all sorts of other outrageous things, I fancy you will agree with me that he must be either an impostor or a madman, or a little of both.

‘Not long ago he and his people took Ningpo, the place where I have been lately staying, and where there were a good many Christians; and I don’t know how many other places he has taken, nor where he is likely to stop. It is a miserable state of things; and the poor people don’t seem much to care who conquers, so long as there is peace once more: yet no sensible English people seem to me exactly to wish them to settle down in their old horrid way again.

‘When I was at Ningpo I went to see the chief building, which is a great Taouish monastery: but there was not much in it that interested me; and the six priests who live there are about as stupid-looking and ignorant individuals as you could wish to behold. But an American gentleman, who seemed to be a sort of missionary doctor, was very good to me; and he took me to some curious places.

‘The Chinese have the most absurd idea about doctoring their sick people, and a good deal oftener kill than cure, I should think: so this good man was trying to do them good in two ways at once; and he says they are a little more get-at-able when they are really ill. There was a family in one part of the town in which one of

the sons was very ill ; so we went to pay them a visit, and were most politely received.

‘ The old patriarch who was the head of the family had got a feast of tea and sweetmeats for us, which we might have enjoyed very well if he would only have let us feed ourselves ; but we didn’t relish the things much after he had broken them up and dipped them into some sauce with his own dirty fingers. However, we were obliged to submit, as we didn’t wish to offend the old gentleman ; and after we had finished our meal we were invited to go and visit the sick man ; and I saw some ladies peeping at us as we passed, who ran away directly they found that we saw them.

‘ The poor fellow who was ill was swollen up to twice his proper size with dropsy ; and my kind friend soon made out that his liver was in a dreadful state, and most likely the cause of it. But these ridiculous native doctors believed that one little thick drop of blood was travelling about in his veins, and that he must get rid of that before he could get well ; and one of the remedies which they ordered him was *toads*, which, if I understood rightly, he was to eat ! However, he would stick to this old quackery, and died soon afterwards, I heard. Ningpo is said to be one of the finest cities on the coast ; and it has a wall round it like most other Chinese cities. They make a great many carpets and mats here ; and the women weave cloth. There are a good many Roman Catholic missionaries, too, in these parts ; and I should think they can’t find much difficulty in making converts, for the people would really have to change so little. Do you know, in one of these Buddhist monasteries they actually have an image of a woman, whom they call “ Holy Mother,” and “ Queen of Heaven ;” and they tell me that in the seventh month of the Chinese year there are a lot of ceremonies performed to get departed souls out of a Buddhist purgatory.

‘ Of course I expected to visit Ningpo, and Shanghai also, which is called “The Model Settlement,” as we had business to do at both these ports ; but it was quite an unexpected turn that brought me here.

‘ Shanghai has some splendid mercantile houses and consular buildings ; for it is a place where people of many nations meet. It



has a great promenade, too, called the “Bund,” and a whole forest of ships in its harbour.

‘ The people were “chin-chinning joss,” that is, keeping the feast of the first new moon, when we arrived ; and, therefore, an immense display of fireworks was going on. These Celestials are such people for fireworks !

I saw also there a rat-catcher : such a queer-looking creature, with a whole row of dead rats, each hanging by its tail to a sort of

large label, on which were two or three characters ; and then these labels were fastened to a bamboo pole, which he carried on his shoulders : but as it was on a sort of stand, he could set it down when he chose.

‘ I was in Shanghai a very short time before I was ordered up the great Yang-tze to Nanking ; and a lucky turn that was for me. Two things I noticed directly about the people that were very extraordinary in China,—one was, that women, as well as men, ride about the streets ; and the other, that the men had thick heads of hair ! I couldn’t imagine how this was till I was told that the Taipings, that is, the rebels, don’t allow of shaving ; so, if ever they conquer the country, those precious pigtails will disappear ! And you can’t think how hard it is to imagine a Chinaman without his pigtail.

‘ The famous old Porcelain Tower stood here, you know ; but the great rebel “Wang” has had that knocked down, amongst other things.

‘ I went out of the city one afternoon to see the “sepulchres of the Ming race of kings,” which are at the foot of the Golden Pearl Mountain, and quite worth seeing, but all in ruins ; for the Tartars, when they came in, broke down the buildings and killed the priests ; and now the Taipings are taking the place of the Manchows, and they never mend anything, though they break a good deal.

‘ I should like well enough now to go on to Peking, just to see if it is as fine a place as the Chinese make out ; but I suppose you’ll say I should never be satisfied : nor should I, certainly, until I had seen everything in the world, if I could have my own way. People do say, that when the English and French troops were impertinent enough to take possession of the Golden City in 1860, they really didn’t find it a bit cleaner or smarter than the other cities—not so good, indeed, as some ; but, of course, all the Chinese puff it off, as they do everything belonging to “the Middle Kingdom.”

‘ Macao is one of the handsomest towns that I have seen. It stands on the left bank of the mouth of the Canton River, and I wrote to you several times, I remember, while I was there. But that is an old Portuguese settlement, you know ; a place which they were allowed to build some three hundred years ago, as a reward to them for helping the Emperor against the pirates ; who, under a famous fellow named Coslinga, were getting so powerful that they really threatened to upset his Majesty. Macao looks just like a European city. It was the Portuguese who settled there that really invented the word “ Mandarin ;” for the Chinese call these men “ Chiouping.” And I don’t think I ever told you that they wear certain marks in their dress to show their rank, and that they get this rank by their own diligence. So Commissioner Yeh, who wore a red button to show that he was of the first class, was the son of a small broker. It is by the buttons on their caps, and by some bird or animal worked on their robes, that they are known.

‘ All the officials of any kind are mandarins ; so you see they, in fact, govern the country. Some of them are titled men, and there are five different ranks of nobility—the “ nau,” the “ tze,” the “ phy,” the “ heon,” and the “ keoung ;” only not one of these ranks is hereditary.

‘ The law allows of no end of appeals, they say ; so I suppose, once upon a time, the government didn’t like killing innocent people : but now, if any man is condemned in one court, and appeals to a higher, and is found guilty there, his punishment is positively increased ; and so on each time, till at last, instead of being simply beheaded, he is put to death with all the horrible torments that you can conceive. Nice people ! aren’t they ? Talking of the old pirates of Chinese seas, I don’t know what they could have been, for they are bad enough now ; and no Chinaman seems to see any harm

in piracy either, or would be a bit ashamed to be a pirate. Our ships make them uneasy now, it seems ; or else, I suppose, no other vessels would be left in these waters. But they catch an English vessel now and then, if she isn't on her guard ; and they have a horrid way of doing so—by fixing strong nets and stakes among the rocks in some places, so that the poor ship that goes in there gets regularly entangled, and then down come the pirate junks and board her.

‘ Not long ago there was a famous pirate, named Chin Apo ; and for his pigtail 15,000 dollars were offered by the Emperor himself. Yet, somehow or other, he managed to bribe or overawe every one, and went about in the streets of Nanking, Canton, or anywhere else, without ever being taken, till he began to meddle with us English ; and we managed to catch him. He was condemned to transportation for life, and sent to Calcutta in irons. But the Chinese can bear anything better than imprisonment, for they only fear death because it is loss of life ; not for anything beyond, however wicked they may have been. So Chin Apo first tried to starve himself ; but the man who had charge of him contrived to pour soup down his throat through a bamboo tube : therefore he tried another plan, and managed to get hold of a rusty nail, with which he opened his own veins. So he died ; thinking himself, no doubt, a great philosopher.

‘ My good friend and master, as I call him, Mr. Brownlow, who has really insisted on my looking seriously into some of the manners and habits of this strange nation, which I have been trying to describe to you, has been up the Imperial Canal to Peking ; and he says that in the north they have customs which we never see down here.

‘ Lots of queer things he has described to me ; and one was a strange way of getting about that would just please Fanny. It is

in a cart with a sail to it, drawn by a donkey in front, and pushed by a man behind. So the common people remove their families ; for this thing is not used by the rich, of course.

‘ The wife generally sits in front of the sail, which is made of a mat, and she has one or two children on her knees. Other children are most likely behind the sail, and lots of goods and chattels heaped about them. It is a most rustic-looking affair, he says, and must be a curious thing, I am sure. I wish I could get a model of one for old Roger.

‘ But it is quite time that I brought this long yarn to some kind of ending. I have tried to write sensibly, and not in the rattle-brained way that you complain of sometimes ; and I have nothing particular to say about myself, except that I am quite well, and in a short time expect to be back in Hong-Kong, and on my way home to see you all ; which I can tell you I shall be glad enough to do. You may get another note, perhaps ; but you won’t hear much till you see me.

‘ Is the old boat on the river in good trim ? Because I should like to take you all on my own element now and then ; and I hope old Pompey is well, and can go with us, because he used to make us such good fun. Willoughby, I suppose, will come over to see me. Tell him that I haven’t forgotten him ; and ask him if I am not a good boy to have crammed up all this learning for your letter.

‘ Good-bye, my dear father, until we meet ; and give my love to mother, and every one else.

‘ Your affectionate son,

‘ HARRY LAWTON.

‘ P.S.—I suppose I mustn’t put a postscript this time, or else I had got something else to say.’



CHAPTER VI.

‘A FEW months more, then, and if all be well we shall have Harry here again amongst us all,’ was the father’s exclamation, as he handed the letter contained in the last chapter to be re-perused by the younger members of the family ; and then followed a general burst of exultation, and a vehement clapping of hands.

‘Wouldn’t it be nice, if we only knew what day he’d come, mother?’ exclaimed the youngest girl, who was still quite a child, and the pet of the family. ‘We’d make such grand preparations, wouldn’t we ? and give him such surprises, too !’

‘He’ll have one or two, I fancy, Fan, without any trouble on your part,’ rejoined her father, glancing knowingly at some one who happened to be a breakfast guest ; ‘and I don’t think, myself, that they’ll be at all displeasing to him.’

But her mother only said, as the bright tear-drops sparkled in her eyes,—‘Oh, child ! don’t be making too sure. The dear fellow isn’t safe back again yet ; and who can tell what may come to any of us before the time when we ought to look for him ?’

‘Well, don’t *you* begin croaking, wife,’ remonstrated the father. ‘There’s no call for it yet ; and once on a time, mind you, you were too brave for even me.’

And the whole party dispersed to their various occupations ; all to work, and some to dream too, either of Harry or of other things.

And while they were busily working and dreaming the months passed away, one after another, until they came just to that time when expectation and anticipation amount, in anxious hearts, almost to agony.

A few more lines only had been received, stating that 'The Gazelle' was weighing her anchor ; and now the very longest period had been allowed for the voyage ; so that the sailor-boy might be expected any day—'young man,' rather, I should say, for Miss Fanny would soon have taken me up short with, 'Boy, indeed ! Depend upon it he won't let you call him *that* !' had she heard me use so undignified a word.

Every day, now, materials for a feast were ready in case they should be wanted ; and every day possible reasons for his non-appearance had to be invented in order to quiet down uneasy thoughts.

It was summer-time again, and roses were twining round the porch at Beechwood Farm, when Mr. Willoughby stepped in one evening, partly to make his usual inquiry. Miss Lawton met him at the gate, with her bonnet on, as if she were just going out ; and perhaps she might have been merely going on some errand which could easily be postponed : but, however that might be, the young man certainly did not enter the house, nor appear to have had any intention of doing so ; for he immediately turned and walked by her side, through those very fields where we first became acquainted with Harry.

They did not, apparently, go on any particular business, as they only quietly loitered along under the hedges, or wherever they might happen to find a pleasant shade, plucking the wild flowers and chatting ; perhaps chatting about the expected one—possibly about other things.

Mrs. Lawton had been very uneasy that day ; and her attention had now been purposely engaged in viewing some new arrival of poultry, and in making arrangements for the accommodation of various pretty hens and a couple of splendid cocks : so, as she was prevented from taking her usual look-out stroll, she had probably commissioned her daughter Jane to go this way in her place. Yet I don't think that Jane had altogether remembered her errand, or thought to notice every one that jumped over that last stile from the road ; for certainly one figure had nearly crossed that field, and, through the gap by the gate, had, as he came along, been curiously watching both her and her companion, before she perceived that most decidedly a youth of some description, and almost as certainly one in a sailor's dress, was rapidly approaching her. In another moment a loud halloo was raised by Willoughby, which was instantly answered from the other field, and then the three might have seen flying, rather than running, to meet one another. But a minute was allowed for hugs and kisses before Willoughby said, ' Now, let's lose no time ; join me ; and we'll soon make them know at the farm who's on the road.'

And a shout was raised by the two young men, which the sister declared must have been heard for miles round ; and before it had been repeated the fourth time they perceived that its purpose was answered ; for across the ground in one direction might have been seen, posting at full speed, Farmer Lawton himself ; from another came hobbling, as fast as his legs would carry him, old Roger Winter, clearly not the man he was two years ago ; while from the house-door rushed in a troop, mother, sisters, and servants,—that is to say, the two who were old stagers, and who 'knew that they might come.'

Well, it is useless to attempt any description of such things, so

we will leave the young gentleman to get comfortably settled and to have his tea, of home-cured ham, new-laid eggs, the most delicious of all bread and butter, plum-cake and fruit, before we take up his story again.

There never was such a joyful or delightful meeting before ! at least, so everybody thought and said ; and Harry was so loud in his praises of everything, and so strong in his expressions of admiration, that even his father could have desired no more ; and there seemed nothing to damp the happiness of that family party, of which, of course, for that evening, his friend Willoughby made one.

But when tea was over, and a good deal of laughing and talking, joking, and romping with the little girls, had occupied another hour, the whole party at length seated themselves in a shady spot in the orchard, and began to be inquisitive about the voyage.

‘ Well, old fellow,’ Willoughby began, ‘ and was your insatiable appetite for seeing new places at all satisfied in your way home ? Did you get your wish of touching at the Cape, or anywhere else ? Come, tell us, for we want to know all about it.’

‘ Not at the Cape,—no,’ said Harry : ‘ I was done again in that respect : but we made a short call at Calcutta, and that was very jolly. Just going into Calcutta, though, we were near doing something that would not have been at all jolly ; and that was, upsetting a boat with a lot of natives in it. It was just a mile or so out at sea that we came across it, tossing about, and not able to get along just as fast as it liked ; so the stupid fellows in it hallooed out to one of our crew, who was staring at them over the stern of the vessel, to throw them a rope, and let them tie themselves on to us ; and what must he needs do but give it them without the least ado,—and a good long rope it was. They hung off—ever so far off—from us ; and as it was a very rough day, and the waves high, we



CUTTING THE TOW-ROPE.

hardly saw anything of them,—only now and then; so, after us they came, tearing and cutting through the sea, and getting nearly full of water every other minute. I suppose we should have swamped them in a little while, for they were so scared that they never thought for nearly five minutes that it might be possible just to cut the rope, and so put themselves out of danger: but at last the bright idea did strike them; and then we saw no more of them till the next day, when the second mate met one of the black fellows in the street, and heard the whole story, which he took care to repeat for the benefit of as many as he could find to listen. So it reached our captain's ears, and the fellow that threw them the rope got a fine rowing. I say, Willoughby, how would you like to find yourself tearing along in that fashion behind "The Gazelle," in a roughish sort of a sea? Stiffish kind of a run wouldn't it be—eh?

'It was a stupid freak enough. But what did you think of Calcutta? We want to know about that, Hal. Did you stop there long?'

'No; only stopped two days and a-half: but there was plenty to see, for it's a fine city, and a curious one; and just one of those days there happened to be something going on among the natives—some grand festival or other; and there were crowds of mahogany-coloured fellows going about in all sorts of dresses. I never saw such a variety anywhere. But you must go and see all that for yourselves, any of you that like. I'm no hand at describing such things as those, after only a bird's-eye view of them.

'As what?' asked Jessie, laughing: 'the buildings, or the country, or the people—which?'

'Well, all of them,' returned her brother. 'They're none of them in *my* way, unless some Mr. Brownlow is always at my elbow to make me take notice.'

'Get away from Calcutta, then, my boy,' said his mother, putting her arm fondly round him, and giving him another kiss; 'and tell us whatever you like best to tell. We shall learn all about the rest by little and little.'

'You've come home to be spoilt, you see, my lad,' remarked his father, as he passed his hand across his eyes. 'I'm afraid they won't approve of it if we set to work to melt you down again while you're with us. Soft stuff doesn't make good sailors—does it? They like the hard metals at sea, I know.'

'Ah, yes! iron, iron! that's what they like on board ship,' answered Willoughby, in a tone of disgust. 'But no matter; we don't like it here—do we, Mrs. Lawton? and we won't have it, either—will we? So now, take notice, we're ready for as many *touching incidents* as you like to give us, old fellow.'

'Touching!' replied Harry, laughing; 'well, then, my first must be about a hunter, I believe. I don't know whether you'll call that touching; but it's the best I can do for you, I'm afraid.'

'We had a very prosperous voyage from Calcutta; passed Ceylon just near enough to get a delicious puff of the cinnamon scent wafted on the breezes, some three or four miles out; and then bore straight down for the Cape, where we expected to put in for water. But we had scarcely got round *our* island, Mauritius, when, by some mischance or other, nobody knows how, we ran on a little mischievous rock, sticking up there just on purpose to get in our way, and knocked a hole in our left side—that is, mother, you understand, not in *my* left side, but in "The Gazelle's," which was a more serious matter a great deal. However, we hobbled on a few paces, and thought to have managed to get to one of our own African settlements, at any rate; but it wouldn't do. The hole was

too large, and it was quite plain that it must be properly stopped : so there was nothing for it but to come down a few pegs and go and ask assistance, and leave to put ourselves to rights a bit, of the French people in the Isle of Bourbon. You may guess we did it as quickly as we could, but it took several days for all that ; and while we all got the chance of looking about us, I couldn't help wishing that the island was ours : for a pretty place it is, I can tell you—ay, and a nice little piece of property for our next-door neighbours also—one of their finest colonies, so people say : and I know that they get sugar, coffee,—very good coffee,—cocoa, nutmegs, and cotton, from this island.

‘ St. Denis is the capital, but there are lots of other fine towns—St. Peter and St. Paul, and St. this and St. that—and well-built towns, and pretty ones, too, with their fine large houses, and the mountains behind them, which make them look quite grand sometimes.

‘ Well now, you see, I had a holiday while we were there, just because there was nothing to do ; so Richard and I got old Mick to come with us ; and off we set on an excursion to one of these mountains. We slept in a very nice place the night before ; and the French fellow to whom it belonged treated us very well. My bedroom looked out into a splendid large garden, full of mango-trees, bananas, and tamarinds. All the air smelt of flowers ; and in front of the house there ran a pretty little stream through the street, which made the air cool and refreshing.

‘ So we set out quite early in the morning with old Mick, and had a glorious ramble to a place called Cilaos, where we saw first a most curious natural bathing-place—a sort of large basin, with small gravel at the bottom, flag-stones round the sides, and a stone at the entrance, and all just ready for any one to sit on in the bath.

It is a large place, big enough for whole families to get into ; and they have just added divisions and shelves for people to put their clothes on : but all the rest is quite natural. And they say that the waters are most wonderfully good for the health, and make old people feel quite young again. Mick tried a bath, and said they almost did ; but I wasn't tired with my climb, and didn't care to waste my time, as I wanted to see the gold mines, of which the Creoles actually declare that a hundred thousand miners digging for a hundred years wouldn't come to the bottom of their riches.

'We went out of this place—Cilaos—very soon, and began to explore the woods ; and there we met two hunters—regular, old-fashioned hunters, that you read about in books, you know. They say that they are only to be found here now. One of them was coming down the mountain-side, and had an immense goat, that he had just killed, slung across his back, and his gun over his shoulder. His name was Hardiman ; and he couldn't have had a better one.

'We made him take us up and down a mountain called Eldorado ; and as he had been nearly all over the world, he made a jolly companion.

'Oh, we climbed up such places ! It was a good thing that we had had some practice in scrambling up masts, and that we weren't subject to giddiness—that it was. At last we found ourselves on a sharp peak of the mountain, and looking down a precipice three thousand feet deep ; and when we got to the top we were obliged to keep quite still until Hardiman made a move, and got us down step by step. But as soon as we had descended a few feet, and found ourselves on a level place, he said, in a low voice, "Hush ! look there !" and pointed with his finger to another peak below. At the same moment he levelled his piece and fired. Something fell, but it was all so quick that we couldn't tell what he had shot.

‘However, all his hunter’s blood was up ; and, without even saying “With your leave,” or “By your leave,” down he tumbled himself, whispering, “Stop till I come back ;” which we were obliged to do, whether we would or not, unless we preferred to break our necks. Fortunately, it was summer-time, and we were not quite high enough to feel very cold ; so we found it good fun watching the fellow sliding along without any shoes, scrambling from point to point, and jumping over all sorts of awkward cracks in the earth. But when he got near the place where the creature was we couldn’t see him ; and when he reappeared it was empty-handed ; so we began to jeer him a bit as he came up again, and tell him that “he had had that nice little run all for nothing.” But he took it very quietly, and only “hoped we hadn’t got tired of waiting ;” and as it was too slippery to think of anything but our own precious bones in coming down, we were generous enough to let him be a bit. Before we were half-way to the bottom, however, the old fellow stopped us short, and called out to us to “Look there !” when we saw a splendid wild goat lying quite dead, just under a ledge of the rock, which he had shot right through the head ; so that it was quite dead when he got up to it. A good shot, wasn’t he ?’

But it will not do for me to be repeating all that our young friend told that night about his voyage, or I shall never have done ; and my readers may be sure that there were many questions put and answered about weather, captain, and shipmates, which would be as dull to them as they were interesting to his own family.

It was only expected that he would remain at home for a month ; but before a fortnight had expired it was discovered that the company to which his vessel belonged was in considerable difficulties ; so much so that, after hanging about for between four and five months, and seeing no prospect of further employment, he began to

get uneasy ; and after some trouble his father managed to get his indentures transferred to a shipowner who was just completing the number of hands for a vessel named 'The Enterprising,' which was destined to sail for Brazil in as short a time as possible.

Many a chat had he and old Roger had together during that stay at home ; and much had the old man been delighted with some account which he had received of Mick's long yarns. 'They weren't like most of the others, as far as he could judge,' he used to say ; 'for Mick seemed to think about everything in a way that wasn't common. He talks a good deal of the voyage on which we're all bound, I take it, young master ;—the voyage, I mean, that you and I were speaking about the night before you left us. And, Master Harry, may an old fellow that loves you well make so bold as to take the liberty of asking whether *you* think any more of that than you used to do ?'

'Now, Roger,' returned the lad, colouring, 'I do call you unreasonable. Haven't I come home with as fair a character as even you could wish ? Haven't I taken up with the best friends I could find ; made up to the missionaries ; been to their churches as often as ever I could ; and even written home to you and mother about their very sermons ? Really, if you're not satisfied now, I don't know when you will be !'

And Harry put on again the look that he used to wear before he first went away, whenever any one even hinted that he might not be quite in the right.

'Don't you be vexed now, that's a dear young master,' rejoined the old man. 'I don't want to seem unkind now, as if I didn't think as well of you as the rest ; but I've come by a strong feeling of late that *my* voyage is nearly done. Sometimes I think that I shall be gone afore ever you comes back ; so I can't help saying what's in my mind. And it seems to me very much as if you were

a bit too easy in your mind, and too sure that all's right for the great voyage, and that you haven't made as certain of everything as you have for going to Brazil.'

'I wish you'd tell me, then, what I've left undone,' returned the lad. 'I've done my best to do my duty; and I don't see what I can do more.'

'Your duty to your neighbour, I take to be your meaning,' said Roger; 'but what about your duty to God? It's that I'm uneasy about. Have you loved *Him* better than aught else, and tried to please *Him* before yourself? That's a great part of your duty, you know—the chief part, to my mind; and I'm afeard you don't take that into your reckoning.'

Harry's countenance fell; but after a minute's pause he said, 'Does any one?'

'Ah, young master! I'll soon answer you that. There ain't a man, woman, or child, that keeps God's law as it ought to be kept; that's why it's so plain that we shall never be right on *your* plan, and why we wanted a Saviour to stand in our place, to die for us, to earn heaven for us, and to draw our hearts after Him. But mind you of one thing, He'll only be a Saviour to those that believe on Him, and are content to be His servants.'

'Well,' said Harry, 'and don't I believe in our Saviour?'

'You must answer that question yourself,' said Roger; 'only take care that you don't mistake.'

'Oh!' returned Harry, putting on a very huffy manner, 'I see what you mean. You'd rather have me *believe* than try to do my duty. That's the way you people talk, I know.'

'I don't know what people you mean,' replied Roger, meekly. 'It's not 'cordin to my notions, anyhow; and I thought you know'd me better, Master Hal. What I was making bold enough to ask had to do with believing, and what *you* call doing your duty as well. For my part, I don't know how you can do the one without the other.'

But as to duty, Master Harry, mind you of one thing. It's all smooth work with you now. You've got your own way, you know; nobody contradicts you, I mean, and duty comes easy enough then: doesn't it?—at least, what *you* call your duty, my lad.'

'What *I* call my duty, Roger!' answered Harry, angrily. 'What *do* you mean, I say?'

'Only that what you talk about, as if it were all of your duty, isn't half of it to my mind, even if were done the right way, which I'm afraid it isn't. But don't be angered now, for by that I don't mean what you think at all; only that when a man tries to do the last part of a thing, and leaves the first part undone, why it generally happens that what he does do is done wrong after all.'

'Really,' said Harry, 'you're enough to puzzle any fellow's brains. I wish you'd speak out plainly, and just tell me what's amiss with me. It's too bad of you to be going on like this at me, and particularly on my last night at home.'

'I meant it kindly, Master Harry, I'm sure,' said Roger, with the tears in his aged eyes; 'and if you wouldn't get so vexed with me, I would speak as plain as ever you like: for there be few people that I care for as I do for my master's only son; and ——'

'I know that, old fellow,' Harry broke in; 'I know all that; and it was too bad of me to get so cross. You and I were always the best of friends—weren't we? only you do puzzle one at times: you know you do.' And the lad's tone became quite patronizing and magnanimous, as though he were generously overlooking an insult or injury: but Roger was not easily driven from his mark, when he was sure that it was a good one; and the conversation would therefore, very likely, have run on for a good while, had not voices been heard summoning him from a distance; and as Harry sailed next day for Rio Janeiro, he had a long time before him in which to puzzle over Roger's questions.

CHAPTER VII.

THE correspondence between Harry Lawton and his family being considerably interrupted during this his second voyage, from circumstances over which he had no control, and his letters being less descriptive than those written during his first absence from home, I have thought that it might prove a better plan to give his narrative in a continuous form, putting together those passages which may be interesting from his letters, and adding what he himself related on his return. But I shall give it in his own words, as follows :—

‘I looked forward a good deal, as you know, to this voyage to Brazil, thinking that it would be the greatest change which I could have after China; and so it proved. But I shall not tell you anything about the voyage itself, as there was really nothing out of the common in it.

‘One is always glad to hear the cry of “Land ahead!” if one is ever so happy on board ship; and I know I was, when Cape Frio was said to be in sight. The bay and harbour of Rio Janeiro are certainly as splendid as you could well imagine; but we had to wait until the next morning before we could see them, as the whole place was in a tremendous mist when we dropped our anchor.

‘I was on watch-duty when the sun rose, and I should like you to have seen what I saw when it got light, and the mountains

seemed to rise up out of the sea, and the town showed itself lying between them, and little peeps of landscape were visible here and there ; while large churches and convents appeared perched on the most conspicuous points, which latter prepared me to find it rather a grand kind of town.



‘ But no such thing. It’s a scrubby sort of place after all, with the most trumpery public buildings that you ever saw, uncomfortable houses, and dirty, mean-looking streets and squares. The great natural attraction here, and what you may call the “lion” of the place, is the Sugar-Loaf Mountain—a very curious affair, which all

travellers go to see. The town swarms with negroes, who cannot be said to be any ornament to it, though they may be a great convenience. You really can hardly imagine how ugly they are, or how disgusting in their habits, unless you saw them as I have done ; but no wonder, treated as they have been.

‘ Yet it is said that they are happier here than anywhere ; and they do seem to have the faculty of making themselves happy where other people couldn’t, as well as of doing a good many other things that would be out of our way. They have the strangest power of carrying things on their heads, no matter how heavy, no matter how light ! It is something extraordinary. I once saw six of these blackies take up a grand piano, and carry it off on their heads without touching it with their hands, grinning with their enormous mouths as they went along, and looking as jolly as if it were nothing at all. Another time I saw three negresses, one with an orange on her head, another with an umbrella closed, and the third with a little bottle ; and they went strutting along with their hands in front, looking as erect and dignified as possible—the things never thinking of tumbling off. Another time I saw a negro with five casks, bound together, all on his head. Those he *was* forced to hold with his hands : but can you imagine what sort of stuff his skull must have been made of ?



‘ These people do most of the work of the town ; for they act as

servants, learn trades, and, in short, do nearly everything. No doubt they would get sharp enough, and a good deal handsomer, in course of time, if they weren't treated as mere goods and chattels. However, it's to be hoped that's nearly over now, at least in the United States, where they seem to have been treated worse than they are here, a good deal.

'The people in Rio are a showy set of folks, and cut a great dash sometimes; but they have no idea of anything like comfort for all that. People say that the Brazilian army is one of the most splendidly equipped in the world, and that a common soldier is fine enough for a lieutenant at least: but they don't trouble themselves in the least about size or colour in their arrangement of the army; so it can never look really imposing. For instance, I have seen a black man marching beside a white one, and a great stout man by the side of a boy of fourteen, and so on.

'Rio is a great place also for processions in honour of different saints, and, in fact, in honour of everything. They get one up on the slightest excuse; and we hadn't been there a week before I had seen two. In one of them there were all sorts of dignitaries, of various kinds, walking in front; then a number of young girls, the prettiest that could be found, all dressed out in their silks and velvets, and immense crinolines, and knowing perfectly well that they were the prettiest part of the show; while in between them, here and there, walked the queerest-looking fellows, with their umbrellas over their shoulders, their cigars in their mouths, and looking as if they had no business there. After these came officers of the army carrying the banners of the saints, and then the tambour-major, dressed in red from head to foot, preceding the sappers of the National Guard, the first of whom were negroes, and oh! such fellows!

‘I don’t think I came across one person in this place that you would be pleased to think I had met ; and my own shipmates were not so pleasant as some of those in “The Gazelle ;” so that I did sometimes feel lonely and dull in a way that I wasn’t used to, for I seemed to have no one to keep me right and straight. But I met one old acquaintance in Rio, very much to my surprise, as it will be



to yours, I know. I had come ashore to look about me, as we often got leave to do, when who should I run against but Edmund Robson !

‘ You’ll remember him, and not be best pleased ; for you never used to like our being so thick, and always said he would lead me

into mischief one of these days ; and as we had quite cut each other, and not met for a good while, I confess to feeling sorry myself in my heart, though I believe I told him I was very glad to see him. It was hard to help meeting, and that pretty often, in a place where I was quite a stranger ; and as I really had no good friends, it didn't seem to make much difference.

' Edmund is settled in a merchant's office in this town, and getting a good salary, considering how young he is,—only four years older than I am. I must say that there are some things I like in him, good-for-nothing chap though he is on the whole. He has a friend here, a young Frenchman, who has been over most parts of this continent, I think, and was very anxious to get us all a little holiday, that we might make an excursion into the interior, and see something of the Indians, and have some fun ; only we didn't see how to bring this about.

' Fortunately, however, François Michaud heard of a house at Victoria which, it was thought, would be inclined to have dealings with us ; and we being, in some way or other, connected with Edmund's masters, by a little contrivance work was cut out there for both him and me.

' We went in a little steamboat from Rio to Victoria, and there we got most kindly entertained in the house of an acquaintance of François ; for these Brazilians are the most hospitable people in the world ; which, I suppose, they have learnt to be from the scarcity of inns about the country.

' A good many Indians were gathered together at Victoria, in a kind of suburb of the town ; but they had become too much civilized, having learnt to make lace, and live too much like other people, for me. I wanted to see them in their wild condition, and the country too, which is full of wonders, and a grand place for naturalists. So we

got some horses one day, and rode a good way into the interior. At first, we had to pass through country that was entirely cut up by little streams and rivulets, so that our horses were sometimes almost obliged to swim ; but that once crossed, we came to a perfect desert, just in the heat of the day ; and never before did I think of a glass of water as so precious a thing.

‘ It was while I was just longing for one most intensely that I felt certain that I saw before me a beautiful lake, reflecting the palms that were growing here and there on the sand, and by the side of which a troop of young camels seemed to be quietly feeding. We hurried on, expecting a delicious draught ; but the further we went the further it retired, till at last we were unwillingly convinced that this was only the mirage of the desert ; and, oh ! you can’t imagine our disappointment !

‘ You have seen some of the splendid insects that I caught here, in those cases that I sent you over ; but you never could fancy to yourself how lovely they look when they are flying about among the flowers. And then, the flowers — well, you have some dried specimens ; but they’ll never make you understand how gorgeous they are, nor yet the size of them, which is sometimes prodigious. François knew a good deal about flowers, and was very fond of collecting them ; so he amused himself with cramming botany into me, which I am afraid that by this time I’ve clean forgotten.

‘ He gave us a very amusing account of what he saw once in going up the river Magdalena, when he accompanied some gentlemen on an exploring expedition, and went in a boat with a crew of negroes — “ bogas,” he called these negro river-labourers. They are fellows that all eat out of one immense red earthen pot, filled with messes of thick boiled rice, plantains, and bits of black jerked beef, all mixed up together. The niggers have each a calabash shell and a wooden

spoon ; and with these they all scramble together, gorging enormous quantities of this food, and washing it down with the water of the river as it flows past them, fresh or muddy as it may happen.

‘ In this same river he saw alligators, and once counted thirty-nine, all lying close together in a line, watching for a fish called “ bagre.” It is horrid to see how they devour this poor fish, making a dreadful noise and splashing of the water as they do so ; and often you may see the blood running out over their hideous jaws. These creatures sleep a great deal in the sun, with their mouths wide open ; and once François poured a whole charge of shot right into a fellow’s mouth.

‘ Sometimes as you go along these rivers, if the boat happens to touch the overhanging bough of a tree, you disturb a whole nest of wasps. Then there is nothing for it but to throw yourself on your face, and shout to the negroes for assistance ; which, however, is not much good, as they are, if anything, more frightened than the traveller.

‘ François told me that once, when he was out shooting wild ducks, he was stung on the hand by a large black insect of the beetle kind, which almost immediately made his arm swell to the elbow, and the pain was so bad that he could scarcely bear it. But as soon as he got to a village an Indian woman applied soaked tobacco-leaves to the place, and made him drink something at the same time, which very soon took away the pain and the swelling.

‘ Talking of insects, I must tell you of an adventure that François once had when he was out painting. He doesn’t call himself an artist, but he is one for all that, and paints like a brick, I can tell you. One day he was out in the country, sketching the trunk of a tree covered with creepers. The creepers here, you know, grow very luxuriantly, and their stems are sometimes as



SKETCHING FROM NATURE.

thick as the trunks of good large trees. Well, he was working away very hard, when all at once he saw a regular army of insects and lizards coming close to him, and heard behind him the cries of many birds ; so, wondering what was coming, he was just going to pack up and go off, in case it should prove a storm, when all at once he found himself covered from head to foot with a legion of ants. Now, South American ants are no joke ; so you will be sure that he jumped up as quickly as he could, upset all his things, and made his escape without thinking of his painting. For three hours he couldn't get back to his things, for these ants took possession of every square inch, and of every shrub and tree, for some yards round the spot ; but he said he would have given a good deal just then to get hold of his gun, for such a flight of beautiful birds followed the ants to make a feast on them that he would have liked to have had a shot at them. However, they and the reptiles and insects made the best of their opportunity ; and when he did manage to get back, he found half his things eaten up, and the painting pretty well spoilt.

‘ But I must get on, and tell you about ourselves, and what we did.

‘ We did not often want a guide, as François knew the country well ; but now and then we picked up an Indian, and got him to show us anything out of the way. Of course, we hadn't much time to spend—only just as much as was taken for the consideration of the matters with which we were charged by the gentlemen to whom we had been sent. But there was a certain virgin-forest just within reach, as our French friend said, and to this we were urging our horses' steps.

‘ Towards evening it began to get very dark, and the rain to fall in such torrents that the path was soon turned into a stream. There is no twilight there, you know ; and we were half afraid of being suddenly benighted, and losing ourselves altogether, before we got

to the house where we were to pass the night. The ground, too, was rocky and uneven; and as our horses could scarcely keep their footing we dismounted, and led them over this part of the ground. I remember, while we were doing so, meeting with one of those huge toads that the Indians call bull-toads. Such a creature! He was nearly as big as—I don't know what: a small turtle, I think, only not so good-looking. I stepped on him by accident, and he did not feel exactly agreeable—a soft, slimy, wet thing! But I wish I had had time to bring him home and get him stuffed; he would have been a nice addition to my stock of curiosities.

‘Well, we just managed to find our way to the house, though we were soaked to the skin; and the next morning we made our excursion into this roadless forest, through which, possibly, no one had ever passed before. It was a curious feeling that came over us when we found ourselves amongst those gigantic trees, which may have stood there, for anything we know, from the beginning of the world; and I should like well enough to be able to send you some views of what we saw. But there was one great drawback, and that was the horrid mosquitoes. Oh, the wretches!

‘Well, we were obliged to cut our way with an axe; and as this was tedious work, we told our Indian guide only just to skirt through one corner of the wood, as we hadn't time for more. As we went along, no sounds met our ears but those of the strokes of our own axes, and our own voices, and the cries of numberless parrots and other birds, that considered this place their own domain.

‘We saw plenty of snakes, and among them that beautiful but poisonous serpent which is called the coral snake. It is marked with a brilliant vermilion colour, and kills as certainly as the rattlesnake. We also came across plenty of reptiles of all sorts, some of the most venomous kinds, whose bite often proves fatal,

though they are but very small creatures. We had brought our guns with us, in hopes of having some sport, and getting some things worth bringing home ; and we hadn't gone far before I heard a great rustling among the mass of underwood through which we were cutting. I stopped to listen, and saw some kind of animal not far off, but so hidden among the boughs that I couldn't tell what it was. I fired, and something fell, with a loud howl ; and we all sprang forward with our axes in one hand and rifles in the other, hoping for a great prize. It turned out to be a large wild boar, and my ball had lodged itself deeply in his chest, but had not killed the creature. It was not worth our while to carry him away, so we just despatched him to put him out of his pain, and left him to be buried by his friends, if they felt so disposed towards him. We then made the best of our way on through the glorious tangle of giant ferns and flowering creepers, of all kinds and colours, until we came out into a more open part, by the banks of a river, where the boughs of the cocoa-nut trees were in some places bending over the water in a way that I have seldom seen them growing ; while white herons flew away at our approach, uttering their peculiar piercing cries. Such a spot I never saw ; but we were a little out of our course, so, turning away from the river again, we continued to skirt along the outside of the forest for some distance.

‘ At last François exclaimed,—

“ It doesn't signify ; I must stop here and make a little sketch. Will you wait just one hour ? I won't be longer.”

“ All right,” said Edmund ; “ and if you'll lend me your gun, and Harry will take his, we'll stroll about, and see if we can't knock over a bird or two for your collection.”

‘ So we loaded the guns, and set off for a ramble ; but for some time we saw no birds worth a shot, nor anything else that we had

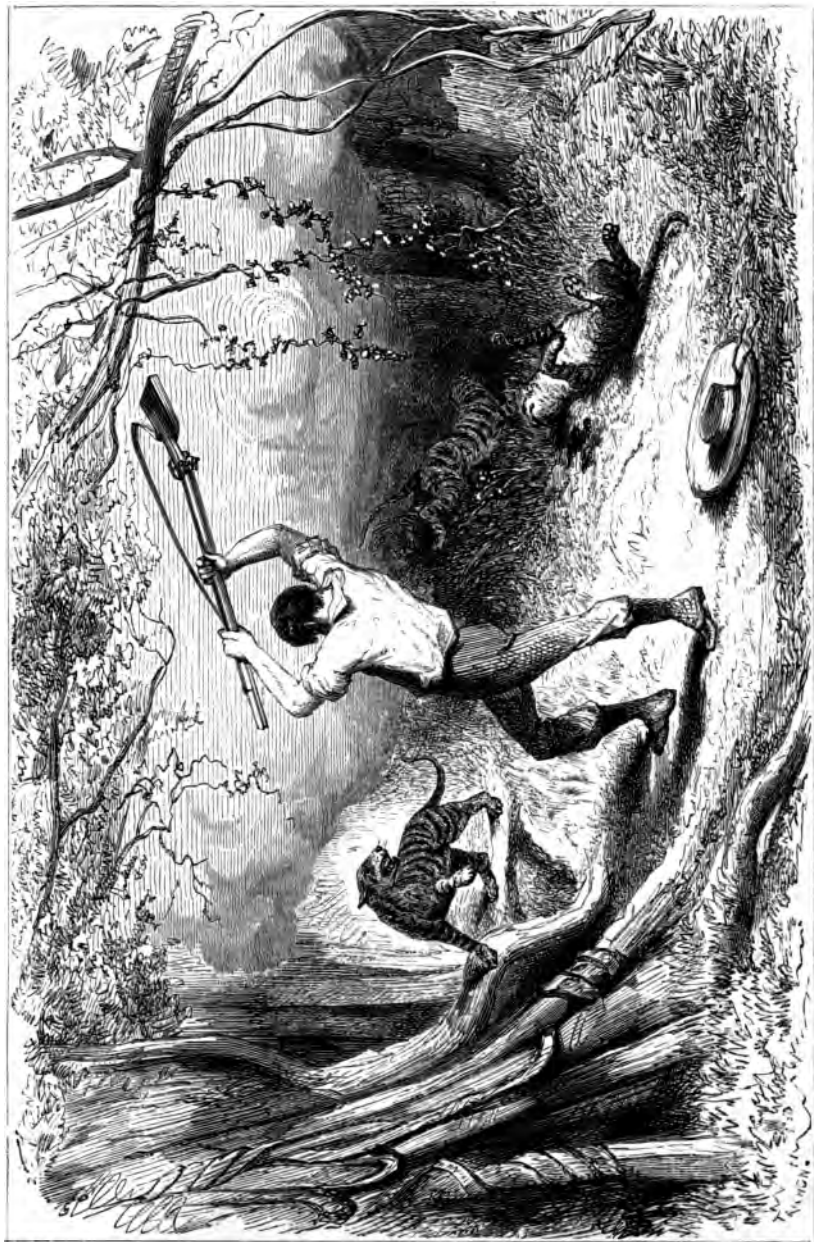
not seen before. So, after a little while we got rather dull, and left off talking; and I began to fall into a brown study.

'It was just two days after I had received mother's letter—the one in which she talked so much to me about the dangers of my position—cut off, as I had told her I was, from any friends worth having, and out of the way of Protestant churches and missionaries, such as I had found in China: for South America is one of the very darkest parts of the world, and the most entirely given up to money-getting and worldliness.

'Well, I had been thinking about this, and wishing with all my heart that old Mick were with us, as well as, if not instead of, Edmund Robson; and, I suppose, because I was thinking, I rather lagged behind; and for a few minutes I lost sight of my companion. Suddenly I heard the report of a gun, and a loud shout from Edmund, who was not many paces a-head of me; and, bursting through the bushes, I came in sight of him in a moment. Just behind him was an enormous cat, lying on its back covered with blood, and kicking and squealing like a dying pig. There was another just disappearing in the thicket, and Edmund was hammering away at a third with the butt-end of his gun. Just as I came up he made a tremendous blow, which smashed the stock of the gun all to pieces against the root of a tree, while the brute, scarcely touched, bolted after his friend into the bushes. I couldn't help laughing at Edmund's rueful face, as he stood with the barrel in his hand, looking at the splinters on the ground.

"Here's a pretty business!" said he; "I wonder what François will say?"

"Why, what a mischievous fellow you are!" said I: "I leave you alone for five minutes, and when I come back I find you fighting with three cats all at once. Why didn't you call me a little sooner?"



“Cats, indeed! we call them ocelots out here; and if one of them got hold of you, he’d scratch your face to some purpose. And as for calling, there wasn’t much time for that, or anything else. But stop that creature’s noise, and I’ll tell you all about it.”

‘I fired at the wounded ocelot as he lay on the ground, and speedily put an end to his yelling; and then asked Edmund again how he got into such a scrape.

“Why,” he said, “I was looking about for some birds for François, when I heard a rustling in a tree behind me; and, turning round, I saw those three fellows crawling down that long bough, and that brute that’s lying on the ground, crouched for a spring. If I hadn’t turned round, he’d have been on my back in a second. I had nothing but shot in my gun, so I knew my only chance was to fire right at his face; and I had better luck than I expected, for I not only settled him, but I expect the one behind him—that rascal that broke the gun just as you came up—must have had his pretty eyes knocked out too, for, instead of making a spring, he clawed away at random.”

“I only wish I’d been a little quicker,” said I, “and then we might have had two skins instead of one to console François for the smash of his gun.”

‘We took the dead ocelot by the tail, and dragged him through the bushes towards the place where we had left our French friend; but we met him coming towards us in no little excitement. He had heard the yells and shouts, and been considerably alarmed about us; and when he heard our story, and saw our victim, he congratulated us warmly on having escaped without a scratch. He looked at the ruins of his gun with more composure than we had expected; but he is a capital fellow, and very good-natured.

‘I do not remember anything else during this little trip that

would be likely to interest you. We were a little after our time in getting back to Victoria, for which I got rather into the merchant's black books ; for though the fault really was not mine, I could not, of course, say so.

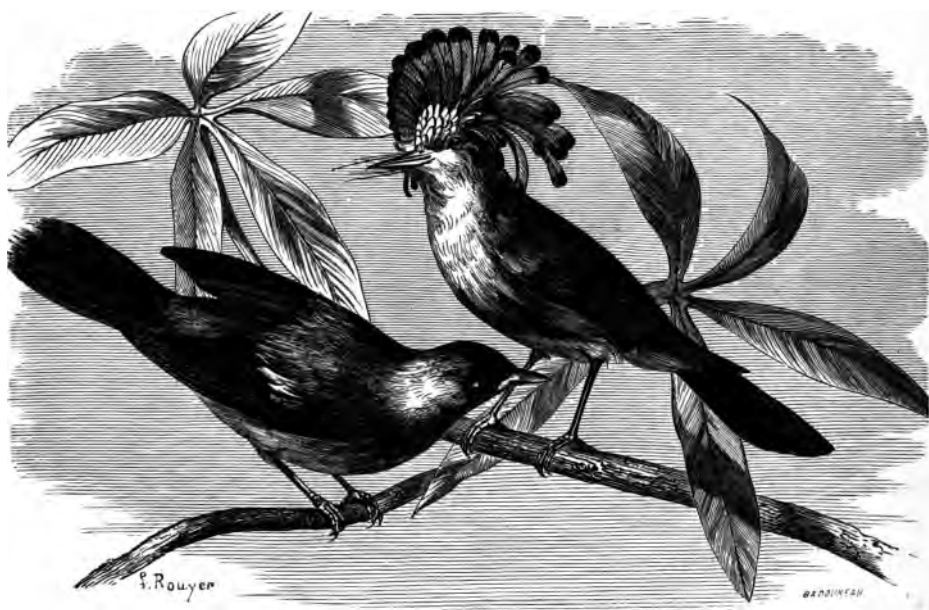
' I also feared my own captain's displeasure, as a vessel had just gone which might have taken us back, and no other was to leave that week.

' But to my great relief, on inquiring at the Post Office for letters, one was handed to me which had been waiting for days, desiring me not to return to Rio Janeiro, but to go on to Santa Cruz by a vessel which was to sail the next day but one. I spent that evening with my two friends, and we were entertained by François with stories about Peru, a country in which he once spent some months.

He showed us a pair of beautiful fly-catchers, the king and the queen, as he called them, of which he was going to make a present to a friend that he had at Victoria. There is a very large variety of these pretty birds to be found in different parts of the world, and they are remarkable for the sharp, sudden turns which they make in catching the insects on which chiefly they live. Some are quite small, only about the size of a sparrow ; but others are as large as a thrush. They are always neat and elegant-looking birds, and one or two kinds have a tail which much resembles an elegant train. Others have fan-shaped tails. They are not gaudy birds in general, though this " king " had a splendid scarlet crest ; and one other kind has a scarlet stomach ; while another has a back and tail of brilliant azure blue. Usually, however, the colours are rather sober, though varied. One species are called greenlets, because there is always some green in them. François had had the king in his possession for a long time, and a fine fellow he was ; but there had been a grand search

to find the lady. I wish I could obtain a pair for mother, for I think she would like them.

‘ François was shipwrecked somewhere on the coast of Peru, he told us, and that was how he came to get up the country. It was just at the mouth of a large river that the disaster happened ; and, not seeing any chance of meeting with another vessel for some time, he thought he might as well accept an invitation to join an



exploring expedition up its course. Their vessel was entirely lost ; but all the crew were saved without difficulty, though they were put to some amusing shifts, and had to make their appearance in the first town they came to in very peculiar costume.

‘ The mate of this vessel must have been an odd sort of fish. He was a native of Peru, I believe ; and had an ape, of which he was excessively fond. This creature was of a reddish colour, and

the man used constantly to go about with it on his back, and keep it in order with a switch. It was named Rufus ; and after his master had lost all his other possessions, this grinning monkey seemed to be his only comfort. The two became inseparables.

‘ Perhaps some of you at home have heard of the ancient empire of Peru, and how it was governed by its own Incas, or lords, before



the Spaniard, Pizarro, made it his business to go and conquer it for Spain.

‘ What an abominable fellow that Pizarro was, by-the-bye ! I should like to know what business he had to be stealing another man’s kingdom, any more than he would have had to steal his next-door neighbour’s house ! The poor people seem to have been very comfortable before, and not exactly uncivilized, either ; but he did not seem to stick at any cruelties, or any amount of robbery, that he

might make himself great. He did it on pretence of making Christians of the people, they say ; and a pretty way of doing that, certainly ! And a funny sort of religion they must have thought it, which taught him to murder and steal ! The Spaniards don't seem to have succeeded in making the people happier, at any rate —if, indeed, they tried ; but no doubt they made themselves a good deal richer by the prizes of gold and silver which they carried away with them ; for there are some of the finest mines of gold and silver in the world to be found in Peru.

‘ One silver vein is 9600 feet long and 412 broad ; and there are thousands of entrances, or *mouths*, as they call them, into the mines. Many of these open into houses ; for some of the cities are built over the mines.

‘ Quicksilver, also, is found in Peru ; which, amongst other things, is used to mix with the precious metals, in order to separate them from the dross of the ore. I don't know how it does this, I am sure ; but they say it does, and that the two metals are amalgamated by the trampling of horses, whose feet, in course of time, get spoiled by the work.

‘ Judging by the pictures which François showed us, it must be a most lovely country. He has such numbers of views of rapids and waterfalls, cloud-capped mountains and birds, of plants and trees, which are so very beautiful, that they made me wish for a jaunt in that direction.

‘ One of the landscape pieces struck me particularly. It was a view on a river, with white cliffs and overhanging trees, and an immense number of wild fowl and birds. François had crossed this river once on an Indian raft, accompanied by three Indians dressed in long white clothes, a monkey, five parrots, and a quantity of fish.

‘ On the day fixed I joined my ship at Santa Cruz, and there

the first strange thing that I saw was a very fine church front! Yes, a front! for it had no sides, and nothing but a hut for the real building. I couldn't help thinking of the shirt-fronts worn by some individuals who are not possessed of the whole article of clothing. It was just done for show, of course; they can't do anything without display in that part of the world.

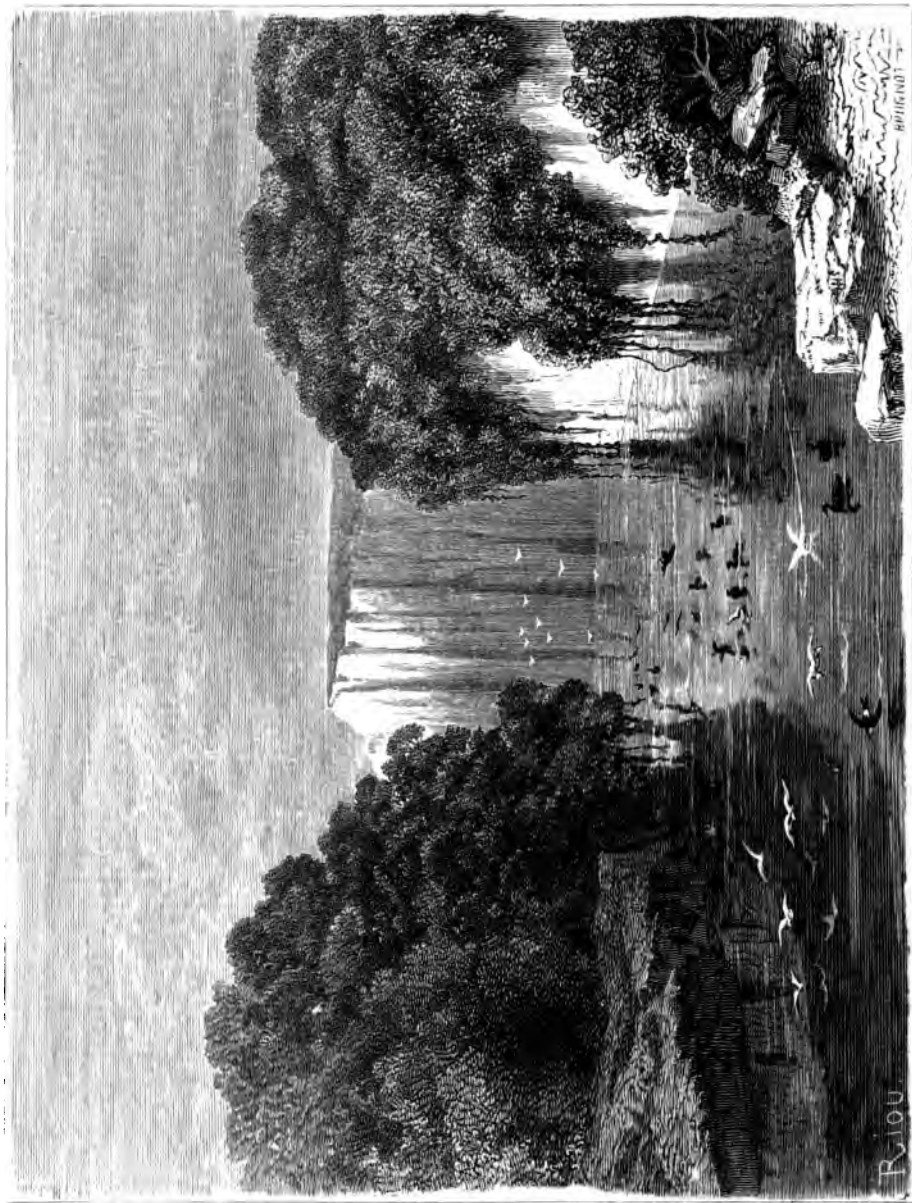
'We stayed in Santa Cruz only two or three weeks; and here it was, as I recollect, that I got the news of my sister's marriage to Willoughby. The shabby old girl! Why, she might have waited till I came home. It was too bad to do me out of that wedding.

'Of course, I guessed how matters stood before I had been at home many hours; but you all made a joke of it for such a time, and pretended it was all a mistake, that it was only just as I sailed again that they would either of them let me congratulate them in earnest. However, I still stick to what I told them then, that they were the luckiest man and woman that I know. Why, really I couldn't say now, if you were to ask me, which I take it ought to be the happiest.

'But I was going to tell you about another little lark that we got while we were at Santa Cruz. I say we, that is, the second mate and myself. There is a river whose mouth is a little to the north of it, on which some trade is done. So we were despatched up the Jequinhana in a sort of covered canoe, that looks very like a baby's cradle.

'Our business did not take us many miles from the mouth, but we were not tied to time very strictly about returning; and, in fact, were given to understand that we might take a little holiday.

'We were paddled along by Indians this time, not by negroes; and, notwithstanding all that I have said about the latter, as I saw them at Rio, I certainly think them more interesting companions than the Indians; for the negroes have strong feelings, and are



very demonstrative, and sometimes very affectionate: but the Indians make a point of never showing any feeling whatever.

‘ We were not altogether easy about trusting ourselves to their care and guidance, and made a considerable show of our fire-arms, in order to produce in their minds a salutary fear. I startled one of the fellows tremendously once, I know, and had some difficulty in keeping my countenance; but I was glad to see that ever afterwards he looked at me rather nervously.

‘ After a while we landed, and our paddlers soon discovered in the sandy beach a good number of turtles’ eggs, which *I* never could find. They were so cleverly hid. The Indians seemed to think them very good eating, and I can’t say that I objected to them, especially as I was very hungry.

‘ I wanted to get a few shots here, but while I was loading my gun I saw a crocodile come gliding softly among the reeds, and speedily took myself off to a pleasanter distance, hoping for the gratification of sending him a little complimentary shot between the eyes. But while I was taking aim, Cæsar, the leader of our crew, made me a sign to look towards the river.

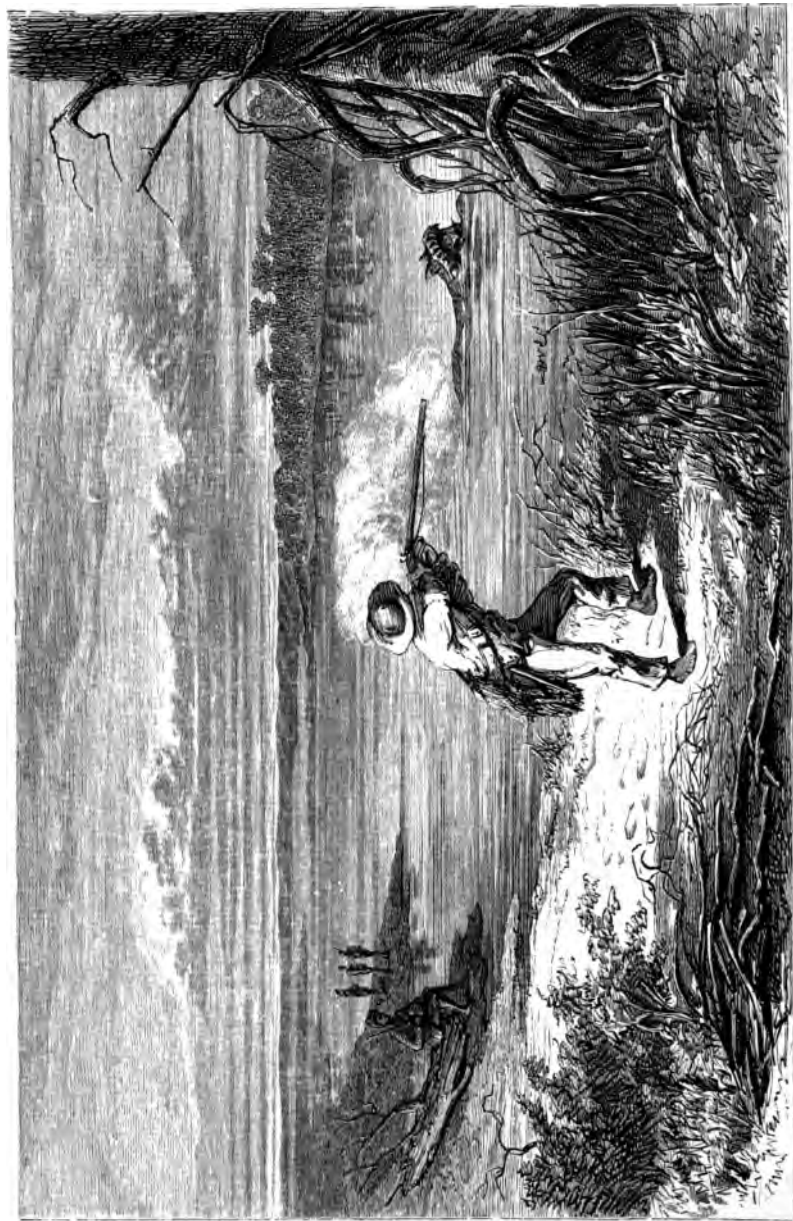
‘ I turned, and for a good while saw nothing. But after straining my eyes in that direction for some minutes, I made out a black point in the water at a considerable distance. It looked something like a head; and I fancied that it was some Indian trying to join his companions. But I soon found out that it was not a man, but a jaguar; and now he had seen us, and was making towards us.

‘ So, here was I, with naked feet; for I had taken off my India-rubber shoes while hunting for the turtles’ eggs; and without my revolver, which I had left at some distance. How I repented having parted company with that! I have never done it since when out in the wilds, as I was then.

‘The Indians were still quietly rummaging for these precious eggs, which they seemed to enjoy enormously; and my companion was a quarter of a mile away in the other direction.

‘So there was nothing for it but to aim at the jaguar with my one ball—the one intended for the crocodile, who, I could only hope, had taken himself off, as he was out of sight. But then, if I missed! My heart beat violently at the very thought; but the monster was rapidly approaching. I levelled my gun; but as I did so he turned, and began to make for another landing-place. Then I ran, in the hope of catching him in the very act of touching the dry ground; but in this attempt I was defeated by thick and prickly shrubs that lay in my way.

‘My only chance, therefore, was to take a hasty side-aim at his head. I fired; and immediately the creature raised his paw like a cat, and scratched his head. He was hit, it was clear, and seemed not disposed for another ball; for, after disappearing for a moment, I saw him make for another point of land, right away from where I was standing; and then, to my great relief, he plunged into the thickest part of the wood and disappeared. Right glad I was, as you may be sure, to find my two friends again,—the mate and the revolver. On our way back we came across some specimens of another tribe of Indians, named “Botocudos.” They were quite naked, and more dense even than our own; and they had done something to their under lips, which enabled them to stretch them out two or three inches beyond their upper ones, and had also stretched their ears till they had come to be nearly half a foot long. We did not return to Rio, but went on with our ship to Bahia—or St. Salvador, as it is otherwise called—which I liked even less than either of the other towns which I have seen in South America; for, much as I admire the country here, and much as I



A SHOT AT A JAGUAR.

should like many another good ramble into the interior, I can't bear the towns, nor yet the people.

'This whole city swarms with merchants of every nation, and with negroes; and as for me, I spent my time as much as I could when I was on shore as far away from the houses as I could get, looking after humming-birds and insects.

'One thing, I must say, has been a puzzle to me out here. You'll say, perhaps, that I should be the last to say it; but why in the world don't some people come out for other things besides getting money and making their fortunes? Why, go where you will, as far as I can make out, you'll never meet with any but the Jesuit missionaries, the monks or the friars; who just come here, it seems to me, on purpose to make themselves comfortable. Or, at least, if they do come out with better motives, that's just all they do when they get here.

'You don't find bigotry in this part of the world; oh, dear, no! they don't care enough about religion to be what you call bigoted. It's all the most barefaced outside show; and why in the world better people don't think it worth their while to come over and try to do a little good, I'm sure I can't imagine. But I mustn't say any more, or you'll say, "Why don't *I* try, if there's no one else?" and I know I ought. But it's no use talking; only it's a great change for me, after the good people I met in China; and other young men that live here always might not be so bad as they are if there were any one to look after them.'

CHAPTER VIII.

'I WASN'T sorry when the time came for us to be thinking about the voyage home again ; for I was sick of the land, and felt quite in my element when I heard the men heaving at the windlass, and began to feel that we were getting under weigh.

'Little enough did I think then how much more I should see before I saw you ; for we started with a fair wind, and in high spirits, expecting nothing but a prosperous voyage.

'But we hadn't got out a mile from land, when we perceived a boat put off from the shore to follow us. The rowers were pulling with all their might, and the coxswain was making signals that ~~they~~ wanted to speak with us : so we lay-to and waited for them. What ~~the~~ communication exactly was I cannot say, as all I know is, that a letter was ~~handed~~ to our captain which seemed to annoy him very considerably, and that ~~about an~~ hour afterwards the ship's course was altered, and we were making for ~~Pernambuco~~.

'Some business, no doubt, had to be transacted there, for ~~the~~ captain went ashore as soon as we arrived ; and as I happened to be in favour with him just then, I got leave to take one of the oars. So, you see, that much as I dislike these towns, I wasn't going to lose the chance of seeing another, when I had it.

'However, I wasn't on shore many hours, and didn't see anything worth talking about : nothing, indeed, that I can think of, except a very laughable incident.

‘ We had anchored there about six o’clock in the morning, and, consequently, were on shore by eight. We didn’t land exactly in front of the town, but at one extreme end of it, I believe, because a gentleman whom the captain had to see was living somewhere in that direction. There were no regular rows of houses, and no such thing as an inn; only a number of nondescript dwelling-places, huts and boat-houses, down by the shore, though some capital villas were to be seen in the back-ground, and about half a mile inland.

‘ Well, the captain went straight off with a man who seemed to be on the look-out for him, after showing me a queer sort of hut where he would meet me again at two o’clock. There **was** a good-natured-looking fellow hanging about the door of **this** place, and I thought I would get him to put me **up to** a few things before I went exploring for myself. I **soon** found out that it belonged to him, and that he **had got a** room inside, where “all sorts of odd fellows put up for a night now and then,” as he said.

‘ “I’ve got a strange sort of a fish in there, now,” he remarked, pushing open the door. “There, you’ll get a sight of him, for he’s fast asleep. Ain’t he a rum’un!”

‘ He certainly was, rather, by the look of him, I thought, as he lay snoring away in a sort of hammock that he had slung to the beam of the ceiling and the door; and my informant then told me that “he was a nat’ralist, and had been roaming about the country wild, looking after snakes and such-like.”

‘ As he said this, his son rushed in by some other way, with a boa round his hat and two boas round his body, only holding them tightly by their necks, as you must always do if you don’t want a bite; though these were not venomous, and wouldn’t have done much harm if they had bitten him. The one on his hat was fastened somehow, I suppose, though I don’t know how.

‘The young rascal winked at his father, who stood at the door, as he went straight up to the hammock, shouting out, “Holla, there! wake up, Sleepy-head, and look at these beauties!”

‘Oh, you should have seen how the fellow jumped up, and how scared he looked when he heard the creatures hissing, and saw them poking their ugly faces close to his! I’m sure it gave a shock to his poor nerves that he will never recover.



‘I thought I should never stop laughing; yet, only a few hours after that I, and all the rest of the crew, were singing a very different tune.

‘We put off to join our vessel that afternoon, and the very same evening “The Enterprising” struck upon a rock.

‘If I were to live a hundred years, I’m sure I should never



THE WRECK OF 'THE ENTERPRISING.'

forget the feeling that came over me when I heard that fearful grating sound, nor the terror that seized every one. Such a cry went up to heaven as I am quite sure you never heard; but, happily, there were some on board who did not lose their presence of mind. There were three good boats, and we were not yet far from land; so, as it was as plain as daylight that the vessel must soon go to pieces, not a minute was lost in trying to lower them.

‘The jolly-boat was first got afloat; and the four lady-passengers with some children, one invalid youth, and two sailors, were put into her; and then, lest she should immediately be swamped, the captain ordered them to push off. The ship laboured and strained fearfully under the heavy seas that were beating against her, which caused much loss of time in getting the long-boat out. I was ordered into that one, with as many more as could get into her, and a store of provisions, and we pushed off, but immediately found that she had sustained so much damage, that she was perfectly unmanageable, and very soon there was as much as two feet of water in her.

‘The captain left the ship last of all, in the gig, which, as soon as possible, came up and relieved us of four of our number; after which all three boats got separated, and we, after drifting about for some time, struck on a rock. I thought then that all was over with us; and so I suppose it would have been but for the entreaties of the ladies, who heard our cries for help, and at length prevailed on the cowardly sailors to turn back and take us in tow. I have a good pair of lungs of my own, and I can assure you that I made use of them on this occasion.

‘We took a little heart when we saw them coming back, and began pitching all sorts of things overboard at a fine rate; so that, at last, we were able to block up the leak with pillows, which one

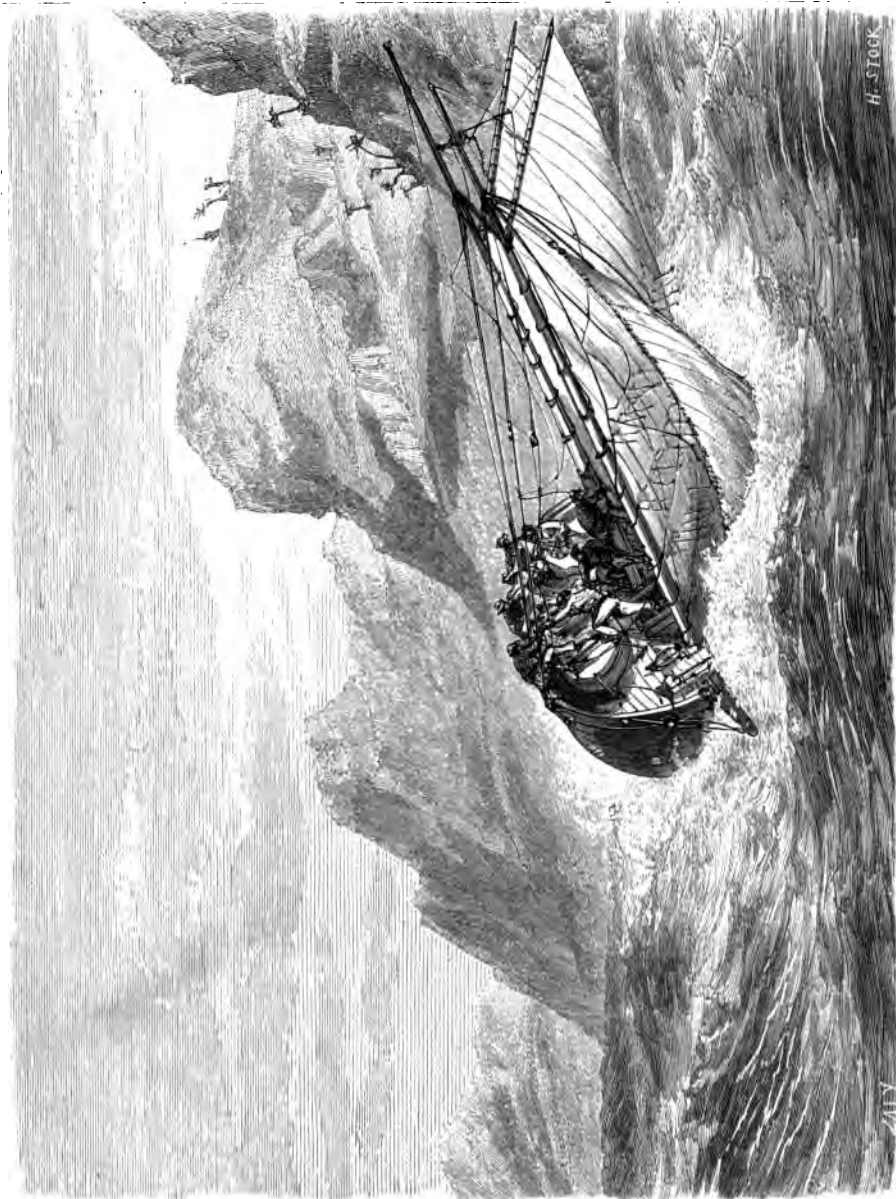
poor gentleman had to sit against till he was almost dead with wet and cold.

‘ After this the two boats managed to keep together for the rest of the night, but what became of the gig I have never heard to this day ; and whether our poor captain and the rest of our crew are at the bottom of the sea, or on some desert island, or whether they got picked up by some vessel that was passing, is all a mystery to us still ; and I heartily wish it could be cleared up.

‘ There we were knocking about all night long, and not caring to use our oars because we didn’t know which way to row. At last the daylight began to appear, to our intense relief ; and the dawn was hailed with as hearty a cheer as weary men could give it. Soon the mast of a ship was seen ; and we made for her with the desperation of perishing creatures, having a pair of trousers put up for a signal. But it was of no use ; for, just as we seemed to be nearing her, a breeze sprang up, and she disappeared. Another and another raised our hopes, only to disappoint us in like manner ; and what with cold, hunger, and fatigue, we were all nearly done up, especially as the sea ran very high, and the wind was strong.

‘ It was just when once more we were giving up all hope that land was discovered just a-head of us, and at the same time the wind suddenly chopped round and drove us straight in shore.

‘ To land, however, was found impossible in such a sea, and on such a rocky coast ; and I suppose that even then we should have been lost in sight of land, had not a Portuguese schooner also been forced, by stress of weather, to come to an anchor there. After considerable difficulty we succeeded in reaching her ; and the captain kindly took us all on board, though it was a considerable cram for him ; and if ever I felt thankful in my life, it was when I found myself safe on board the “ Dom Luis.”



Page 118.

'THE DOM LUIS' ASHORE.



'Anything in the shape of comfort was a luxury to us just then ; and thankful enough were any of us who could get even a plank to stretch ourselves upon, even though it were side by side with the negro sailors. We soon found that we were on board a coasting-vessel, which had got quite out of its course in the gale, and during the previous night had also very narrowly escaped shipwreck. Indeed, the position of her crew for a time must have been as perilous as our own, or even more so, as they had no boats to take to. She had been driven on shore by the wind, and, not having taken in her sails, had been pretty nearly thrown over on her beam-ends ; but a heavy sea happily washed her off again, and the leak that had been made in her being an insignificant one, she soon righted herself again. I don't doubt that this escape had opened their hearts to our distresses : for we were a heavy burden for them, although our crew had not been a large one to begin with, and as many as possible having crowded into the missing gig, our numbers were considerably thinned.

'The "Dom Luis" was a pretty little vessel, and its destination was Para, at the mouth of the Amazon ; from which we were still a very considerable distance. Not having provision for a long voyage, especially with so large a crew as we now were, the captain gladly put those of our men who knew the coast on shore at the first little fishing-place that we had to pass ; but as for me I preferred to go on to Para, as I knew that I was more likely to get a passage home from thence, it being a considerable port, than from any of these little places. And thus, you see, I have come to visit quite another part of this wonderful continent, and to see the mightiest of all its rivers.

'A strange place is this Para ! The first thing that struck me in walking through the streets was the number of living corpses

who seemed to be walking about. I thought, "What an unhealthy place it must be!" and was rather in a hurry to get away, but was soon informed that these people were not ill; that they were only very anxious to get rich, and so they lived at the smallest expense possible in order to save. Most of them were Portuguese, who live on a few bananas a-day, though some of them were already wealthy men.

'Being only just south of the line, you may be sure that this town is very hot. I had heard a great deal of it at Rio, where everything wonderful or good is said to come from Para; and there's no mistake about its being a curious place. The shops are the strangest things you ever saw. I saw one which was said to be a shoemaker's; and I suppose it was, as the blackie who kept it was sitting at his door, industriously working away at a pair of shoes. But I'll just tell you what other articles he had for sale. On the right side of his door there were two shelves, on the lower of which were a hat, a bonnet, two or three bottles of spirits, &c. On the upper were a large bunch of turnips, and several pairs of boots and shoes; while hanging over them were a gun and a large guitar. A little to the left was a parrot in its cage; and higher up a monkey, another hat, and a French horn; while over the door were a row of candles, and on the right side of it, high up, was another monkey swinging, and playing with a fine large bird. There is a medley for you!

'I had to wait here a week until a vessel started, which was to touch at Trinidad before sailing for England; and I can tell you, mother, that I didn't quite forget all that you and father and the rest must be suffering on my account. But, you see, I really couldn't help it, and the first chance I got I sent you a letter.

'Something, however, I had to do with myself during that



Page 120.

A SHOEMAKER'S SHOP IN BRAZIL.

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week ; and, hot though it was, I explored the mouth of this branch of the Amazon—the Rio Para—and crossed the isle Johannes to see the old lady's own mouth.

‘What we suffered from insects on this little jaunt I really cannot describe to you.

‘There is one tiny little wretch, called the *Pulex*, which amuses itself with getting into the flesh of your feet under the nails, and laying its eggs there ; and we found it necessary to have our feet examined every night, and get these things extracted with a pin and a penknife.

‘Wherever you stay, some one offers to do this kind office for you. Once I foolishly declined, thinking it too much of a bore ; and the consequence was, that the next day eleven nests of eggs were found in my feet.

‘I shan't soon forget that operation ; for, whilst the girl was doing my feet, a whole swarm of flies and other creatures, attracted by the light of the candle, set upon me in such a way that they nearly drove me mad.

‘Certainly, no one who much objects to insects ought to settle in Brazil. I am sure that Jessie shouldn't.

‘My week at Para soon passed, however, in spite of them ; and in a short time I found myself at the isle of Trinidad, where, to my extreme vexation, I learnt that they meant to hang about for nobody knew how long.

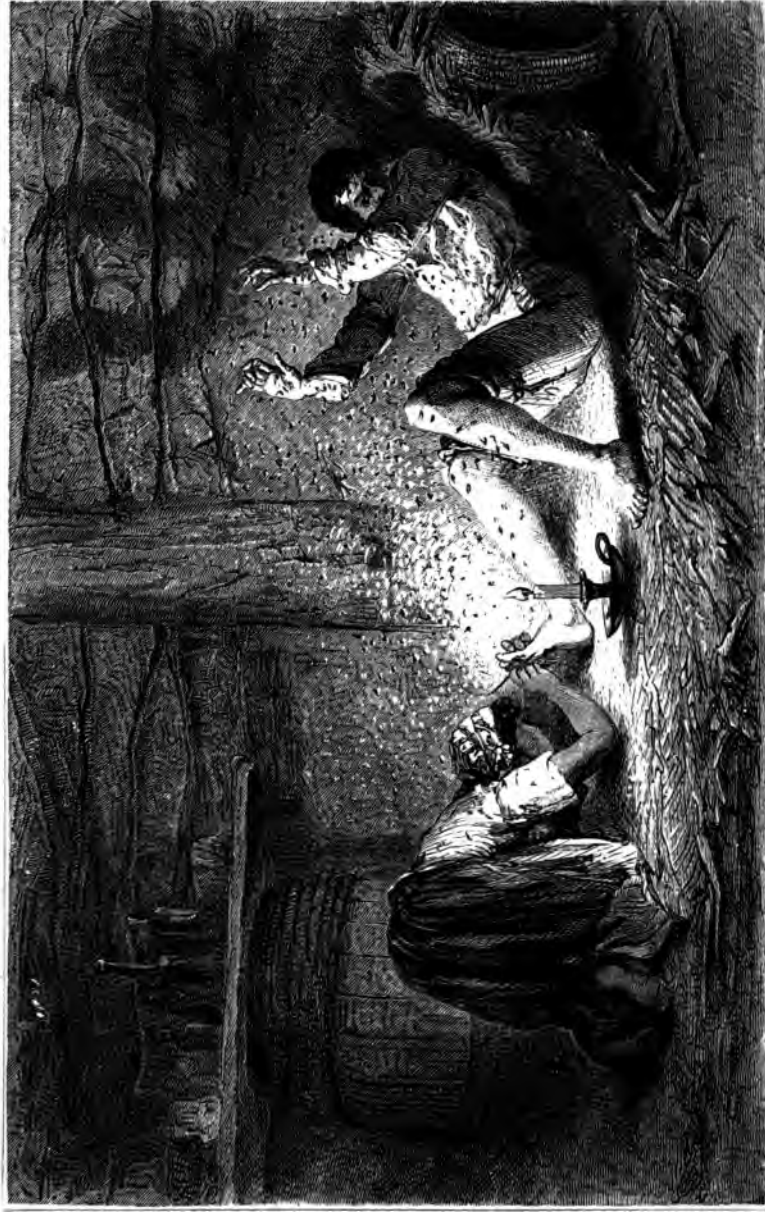
‘I was in a great taking about that, and began to wonder also how in the world I was ever to get back to England, even when we did get to Portugal, which I had never thought much about before. For though I had a little money, which I had given to the captain as the first instalment of my passage-money, and had agreed also to do some work on board, still it all came to very little considering

the length of the voyage. So, altogether, I was in a great pucker, and for the first time in my life stepped on a new shore without feeling the least curiosity about it.

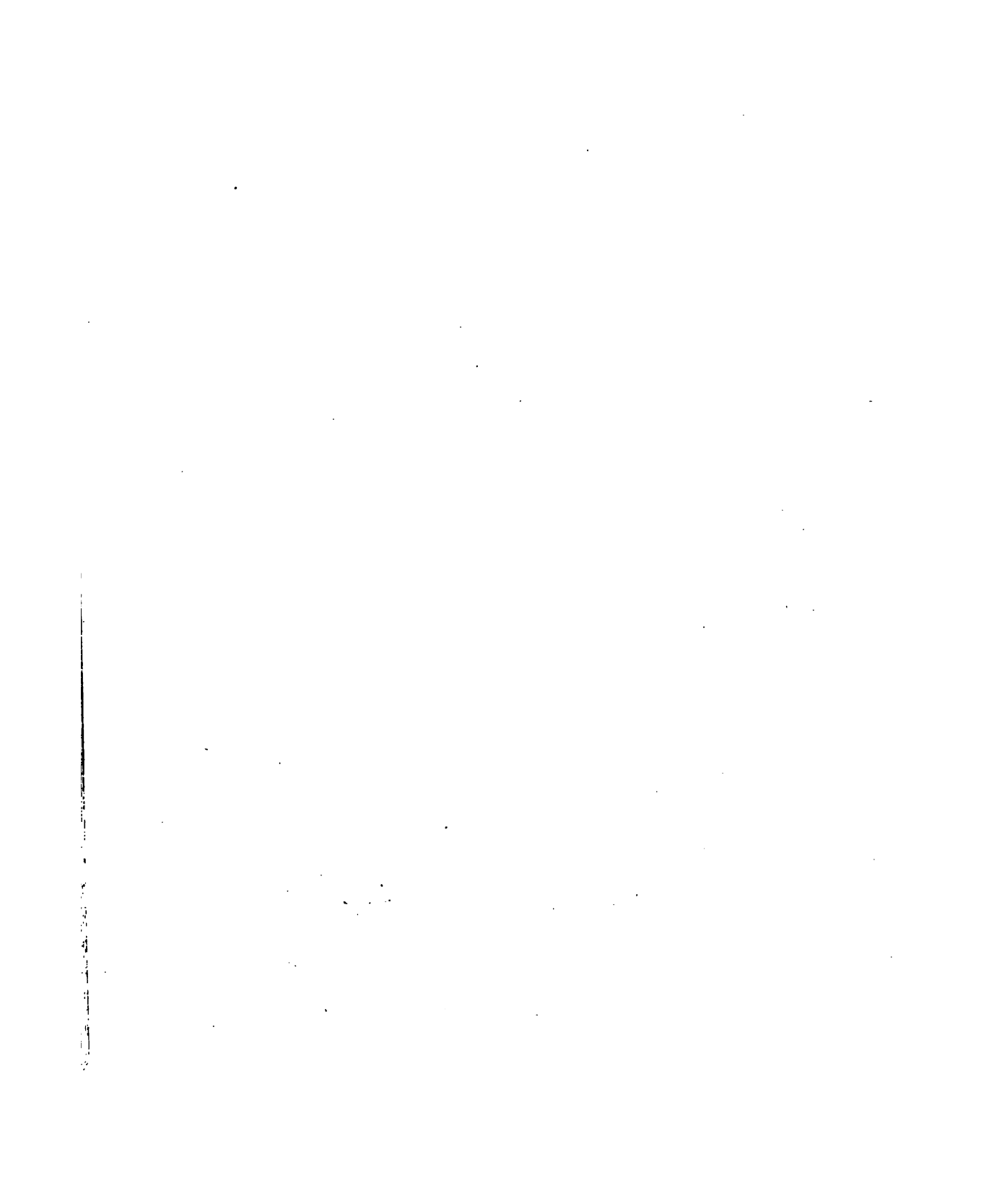
‘ There were a crowd of people hanging about the harbour, some watching us landing, and some busy about other vessels ; but I never took the trouble even to look at them, so that I felt rather extra startled when some one clapped me on the shoulder, and a voice that I seemed to know called out,—“Holla, old fellow ! you don’t mean to say it’s you !”

‘ I can tell you that I never felt more of a baby in my life than when I looked at the speaker, and recognised my kind friend Mr. Brownlow. I declare to you, mother, I could have given him just such a hug as I give you, when you and I haven’t met lately, and done it with all the pleasure in life. Pretty soon he’d walked me off to his own lodgings (for he had been staying on shore some time), and I had told him all about my troubles : and a precious comfort it was to have any one to tell them to. Ah ! and if I must be honest, I may as well confess that I even went so far as to say that, after all, I wished I’d stayed at home, and never been a sailor at all. But that feeling went off as soon as things were straight again ; and I wouldn’t repeat it now, nor couldn’t ; for I like my profession, with all its dangers, and never feel so much at home as aboard ship. Besides, as he said, “ It was no good thinking so now, being too late in the day a good deal.”

‘ But what am I doing, spinning away like this ? The long and short of it is, that Mr. Brownlow was mate of a vessel bound for Mexico, and that, as I was situated, he thought nothing would be better for me than to go along with him, and so get landed at last in Old England, instead of such a way off as Portugal. He could get me a berth, and they were on the point of sailing ; so it



AN UNPLEASANT OPERATION.



was soon settled, and in eight-and-forty hours more Mr. Brownlow and I found ourselves in the Caribbean Sea, and sailing again in company on board "The Halcyon." We passed under Jamaica, and close to Cape St. Antonio in the island of Cuba ; and in a wonderfully short time we had anchored in the harbour of Vera Cruz, one of the chief ports of the ancient empire of Montezuma, the old Indian monarch whom Cortez, the Spaniard, turned off his throne, as Pizarro did the Inca of Peru.

' Vera Cruz is a very fine city, and its white domes and steeples look remarkably well against the sandy hills behind it. It is built on the very spot where Cortez landed.

' Mexico belonged to the Spaniards after that, you know, until 1822, when the Mexicans turned them out and set up a republic ; but now it is an empire again, as in the old times of Montezuma : only Maximilian, the emperor, is not one of their own choosing, but sent there by the French, and supported by French soldiers. So the country is a curious sort of medley, being full of old Spanish, and still older Indian, buildings and remains ; and peopled by Indians, native Mexicans—who are a mixed race, the descendants of the old Indians and Spaniards who intermarried—Spaniards, and French.

' In one place the European inhabitants will point out to you the stone on which numbers of human sacrifices were offered under the old Indian superstition ; and *you* might point out to *them* endless signs of the bloody work done by that horrible Inquisition, which put so many hundreds and thousands of the poor natives to death, just because they would not turn Roman Catholics at the bidding of their conquerors.

' Mr. Brownlow made my blood run cold by the dreadful things which he told me about the conquest of Mexico and the Spanish government of it ; and since that he has lent me the history of it to

read for myself. What a pity it does seem that such a fine country should ever have fallen into Spanish hands, and so come under the tyranny of these priests! I met two of the monks just after he had been telling me all about it, and I don't suppose I looked at them any the more amiably. If I did, I didn't feel so, at any rate. People say that the times are altered, and that they wouldn't do such things now-a-days; but the way they go on here doesn't incline one to believe that.



'I suppose you know that all the countries that I have been in lately are subject to earthquakes. I never happened to feel much of a shock though in Brazil, only a little trembling of the ground once or twice; but we hadn't been in Mexico a week before, one day, when I was sitting in a room on shore and reading a newspaper, I thought I felt very giddy, and looking up, I saw the curtains shaking about. I opened the window and went out into the balcony, and there I saw in the street before me every single person on his knees.

It was a crowded street, too; and yet there was no terror or hurry visible among the people, only they had all dropped down just where they stood; and one could hear a low murmur of prayers, while the city swung backwards and forwards for a minute or two, just like a ship at anchor. As soon as it was over the whole multitude got up, and went about their business in the quietest way in the world; so that I saw that they were

perfectly used to this kind of thing, and didn't think much of the danger: and yet I could plainly see that some of the larger buildings had suffered a good deal from the shocks of earthquakes.

'One should go into the market to see Mexican life among the lower classes, and a good variety of picturesque figures. I have used that expression a good many times; but, you see, I caught it from Jenny when I was at home. It's not a sailor's word for certain; and if it were not too much trouble I would hunt after another.

'I know I wished I could draw the last time I was in one of these markets, for I never in my life saw so many queer-looking people gathered together in one place.

'There was one fellow, who called himself a hatter, with a whole assortment of hats on his head—big ones at the bottom and little ones at the top, one over another, and a bag of hats over his shoulder. I thought he looked very much like a Jew. And there was another man who had baskets to sell—a regular character he was, with his black face, bare feet, white shirt, and independent manner: and his baskets were very pretty ones, too; so pretty, that I couldn't resist them, but bought one for Fanny, as you remember. Many of these people are Indians, you know.

'I wish the Mexicans would keep to the old Spanish costume, and not imitate the English and French, as they do now-a-days; for the other is much more picturesque, to my mind. I like the



old Spanish mantilla, which all ladies of quality used to wear, and some do still, though many drop it; and I think it suits the Mexican face and dignified way of walking. The women are very stately, and have fine, large, dark eyes, though they are not altogether good-looking in other ways: so a grand style of dress suits them.



‘I like the men’s broad hats, too; and they look very imposing when they are on horseback, especially if it rains, when they envelope themselves in large-patterned rugs and mats.

‘People ride a great deal on horseback in Mexico; but when they go any distance they are generally armed, as the country is seldom in a very quiet state, and there are lots of brigands about.

‘It must be rough travelling sometimes, as between the

towns you cannot always easily procure common necessities. But wherever there are a few people living scattered about, they often get up an extempore little market under a sort of large wooden parasol, which they stick up on poles. We were very pleased to come across such an affair once, when we were reduced to great straits. A man and woman, dressed in a very nice country style, were keeping it; and though they had not much to sell us, they had two things that we were very glad to get hold of.

‘ Those two things were *tortillas* and *pulque*; for which piece of information I don’t suppose you will be much the wiser, unless I describe these same articles to you: for, though they are both regular Mexican articles of food, I don’t imagine that you ever heard of them.

‘ The tortillas are maize cakes, which are eaten at every substantial meal, as bread is with us. Indeed the lower classes never taste ordinary bread; and even the upper classes eat wheaten bread much as we do cakes. The people who make them are called Tortilleras; and you see rows of these women in the streets, sitting on their heels, as they must do at their work, and ready to make tortillas for any customer: but every young lady learns to make tortillas as a necessary part of her education, just as young ladies used to learn cooking in England. When you are going a journey you lay in a stock of them; and if you run short,



the chance is that you will find it very awkward. You have to pay a good price for them, as you do for everything in Mexico ; and to look out, too, that you don't get cheated if you are dealing with the natives, for they have been so robbed and cheated themselves that they have come to be very like the Arabs,—“their hands against every man,” just because they believe “every man's hand to be against them.”

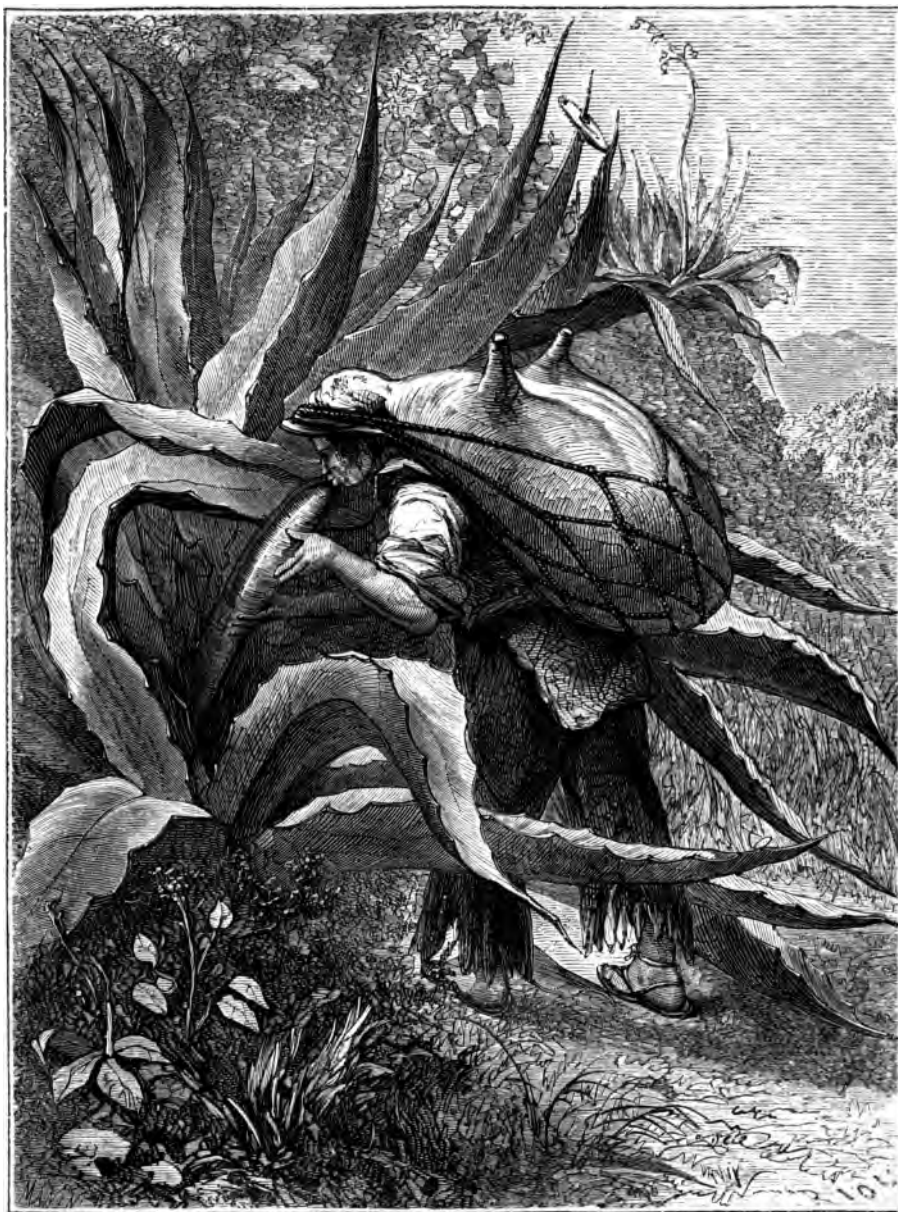
‘The pulque is a kind of drink—a sort of wine, in fact—which is got from the sap of a large species of aloe, called the *Maguey*, or Great American Agave.

‘It is a fine tall plant of a dark-green colour, and has very large and thick leaves ; and the culture of this plant pays very well indeed, although you must wait some time for your profits, as it does not come to perfection until it is eight or ten, and in some places not till it is twenty, or even five-and-twenty years old. Then, if left to itself, it would throw up a high flowering-stalk and flower.

‘But the cultivator is on the look-out for this moment, and when he sees the leaves inclined to draw closely together he puts in his knife, and cuts deeply into the very heart of the plant, taking away all that tight scroll of leaves which curl round where the flower-stalk is coming, and making a great hollow place in the middle of nearly a foot across.

‘The sap continues to come streaming up, and having nowhere else to go now the leaves are gone, it all pours into this great hollow bowl, which has to be emptied two or three times a-day for eight or ten weeks, and sometimes for months. This sap is the pulque ; and now I'll tell you how they empty it out.

‘A man—who is generally an Indian, I believe—has a large leathern bottle on his back, and fixed round his forehead ; in his



DRAWING OFF THE PULQUE.



hand he has a long gourd, with a bull's horn fixed at one end, which he puts into the hollow place where the sap is; then he sucks in the air at the other end, and when the sap comes up he lets it pour into the great leathern bottle, where it is left to ferment slightly.

‘It is only a mild kind of drink; but brandy is sometimes distilled from the same plant.

‘As soon as all the sap is gone the plant dies; and it would die too soon if the knife were put in at the wrong time.

‘In one part of this curious country there are pyramids, though who built them no one can tell. But there is a very curious old Indian tradition about the Flood and the Tower of Babel connected with one of them which I must repeat to you.

“Before the great inundation, which took place in the year 4800 after the creation of the world, the country of Anahuac” (that is, the great table-land and valley of Mexico) “was inhabited by giants; all of whom either perished in the inundation or were transformed into fishes, save seven, who fled into caverns. When the waters subsided one of the giants, called Xelhua, surnamed ‘the Architect,’ went to Cholula, where, as a memorial of the mountain Tlaloc, which had served for an asylum to himself and his six brethren, he built an artificial hill in the form of a pyramid. He ordered bricks to be made in the province of Tlanamalco, at the foot of the Sierra of Cocotl; and to convey them to Cholula, he placed a file of men, who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld with wrath this edifice, the top of which was to reach to the clouds. Irritated at the attempt of Xelhua, they hurled fire on the pyramid. Numbers of the workmen perished; the work was discontinued; and the monument was dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air.”

‘After this I need not tell you that the Aztecs, or old inhabitants of the country, were a very interesting people, and not savages by any means.

‘They knew how to write in hieroglyphics, to cast metals, and to cultivate some of the products of their country ; and they were very clever in many mechanical arts, and had an ingenious way of reckoning their time—or, rather, two ways : one called “The Reckoning of the Sun,” which was used for general purposes ; and another called “The Calendar of the Moon,” by which they reckoned their religious festivals.

‘I suppose it is their having this last calendar that makes some people fancy them to be part of the lost ten tribes of Israel, because the Jewish feasts were so much reckoned by the moon.

‘Whoever they were, I think it was an abominable thing to serve them as the Spaniards did ; and no wonder that Spain has come down so low, compared with what she was, when we think how cruel she was in the days of her glory.

‘And now, what will you say to me when I tell you that I went to see a bull-fight ?

‘A horrid sight it was ; and though I wanted to see one, I never wish to see another. They say that they’re better worth seeing in Spain ; and I should think they must be if the bull has much to do with it ; as this one was nothing of an animal, and had no spirit in him to make a fight of it. All the rest of the show, I suppose, must be much the same.

‘It was a very grand assemblage of people, all dressed after their different fashions in great splendour. And there was the Alcalde presiding ; and the picadors mounted and armed with lances, to provoke the poor brute ; and the bandarillos to do their parts ; and the matador to give the nominal death-blow, with all due

pomp ; and the butcher, dressed in white, to do it in reality, as the matador scarcely ever succeeds.

‘ Sometimes it happens, that when the bull won’t fight at all, but only tries all he can to run away, the spectators call out, “Caula! Caula!” which means, “Tail! Tail!” and then, if the Alcalde chooses to give the approving note from his trumpet, two or three of the best-mounted horsemen rush forward at full speed after the poor hunted



bull, who tears off for his life ; till the swiftest rider, coming up to him, catches hold of his tail with his right hand, and passing it under his own right leg gives it a turn round the raised pommel of the saddle, wheeling his horse round at the same instant ; and this almost invariably throws the poor bull flat on his back. I saw that done, and heard the people shout, when after so many united efforts this one animal was at last finished by the butcher ; but I

didn't see much to shout about, for it wasn't such a wonderful victory after all !

‘ Well, you know we didn't stay long in Mexico, and only saw a very small part of the country ; so I really think that I have told you all the things that struck me most.

‘ I always was fond of seeing new places, and always shall be, I believe, as long as I live : still, when I was with Mr. Brownlow, I always found plenty to do, and could not spare much time for sight-seeing, though I dare say I learnt more from what I did see. So if I didn't come home more industrious, and a little wiser for having been with him, why, all I can say is that it was my fault, and not his.

CHAPTER IX.

AND now, having accompanied our friend Harry on one long voyage eastward, and another westward, it is time that we began to think of taking our leave of him, lest our readers should weary of his long yarns ; but before doing so, we must just once more see him safely back in the family circle.

Beechwood was not then in its summer dress. There were neither roses blooming on the porch, nor flowers in the garden ; the thick, rich, standing corn, was not making the fields appear to 'laugh and sing,' nor the full chorus of birds pouring forth their gladness of heart, as if to welcome the traveller's return, as on the last occasion : but instead of all these pleasant sights and sounds there was the snowy mantle of winter covering everything, and looking very lovely in its pure whiteness under the bright sunshine of a clear, frosty day ; while here and there, where the wind had displaced it, or the sun a little melted it, appeared the scarlet berries of the holly or the mountain ash, and the beautiful strawberry-like fruit of the arbutus ; and under the windows of the kitchen and the parlour, as if to add another welcome spot or two of red to contrast cheerily with the cold, white carpet, might have been seen two or three pretty little redbreasts, who had come to beg for their wonted meal.

The sun itself was casting its reddest parting beams over the

landscape, and throwing every object into the strongest possible relief at the moment when young Mr. Harry Lawton—for so we really must now call him—made his appearance at ‘the old place.’

He was not expected this time, never having been able to fix the date of his return in any of his letters; so, creeping softly along under the bushes, he contrived to effect his entrance, unobserved by any one, through a side-way which he well remembered, and suddenly to appear in the parlour, where the whole family were assembled at tea by a large and blazing wood fire. A sudden upsetting of the tea-things, and a united shriek of ‘Harry!’ soon brought in every servant on the premises to see what could possibly be the matter; and after a volley of hugs and kisses, and of shakings, or rather wringings of the hand, there followed of course, according to custom, another volley of remarks and questions, which, for the most part, got no very particular replies, or if they did, these were not heard amidst the general storm of tongues. In short, nobody came to any particular conclusion about anything whatever on that first evening, except that Harry was back, and that they were very glad of it.

‘How everything is changed!’ was his first remark to Willoughby next morning. ‘Why, it’s positively *years* since I saw this place in winter-time; and the very sight of it makes me feel about thirteen years old again, I do declare. But they all look older—and changed, too; my father more so than I like: and as to those girls, why, they are grown out of all knowledge.’

‘And so are you, my dear fellow,’ returned Willoughby; ‘so I don’t think you ought to complain. Come round the place now, and I’ll show you a few other changes, and additions also,—our little snuggery for one, and some little matters which were suggestions of my own.’

‘Of yours, indeed, James! Ah, weren’t you a lucky fellow to step so nicely into such a comfortable berth?’

‘As a share of the “seedy old place?”’ rejoined Willoughby. ‘I hope you’re not already repenting of your choice, and wanting to turn me out again?’

‘Not a bit of it!’ returned Harry: ‘don’t you be afraid of anything of the sort. It was little I guessed what I was getting you to call for, when I asked you to come down here as soon as you arrived from China: but glad enough I am that you did come, though; for if you hadn’t been here to help father, I couldn’t have felt quite easy in my mind as a sailor, though I never could have borne to be anything else. But what do you mean by calling it a “seedy old place?”’

‘Somebody slipped out to me one day that such used to be your favourite name for it,’ answered Willoughby, quietly.

‘Somebody! Who? Why, it must have been Roger Winter, the old scamp! I wanted to see him, and as you’ve never answered me yet about how he is, though I’ve asked you three times over, I’ll be off now, and give him the blowing-up he deserves.’

‘No, my dear fellow,’ said Willoughby, laying his hand on his arm to stop him, ‘you can never do that again: he’s beyond any blowing-up that you can give him, though I didn’t tell you before, because I knew you would be sorry to hear it.’

‘Dead!’ exclaimed Harry. ‘You don’t mean that he’s dead! I never thought of that.’ And as he spoke, the young fellow’s voice and countenance expressed so much real grief, that his brother-in-law was vexed with himself that he hadn’t contrived to keep him in ignorance a little longer.

‘Why, they told me he was quite well, when they wrote last time,’ continued Harry. ‘I can hardly believe that you’re not

taking me in. Oh, James, I *was* fond of that good old fellow ; and I was so counting on telling him all about my adventures. He was just like a grandfather to me, ever since I can remember ; and I cared for him more than for my own.'

'I don't wonder at it, my dear fellow,' replied Willoughby, taking care to avoid meeting his eyes, because he was aware that they were in a moister state than he liked to have seen. 'He was a great favourite of mine also, though I hadn't known him so long as you ; and we all miss him dreadfully. He was quite well until a month ago last Tuesday ; and his attack was not one that frightened any of us much. But from the first he was sure that he should not recover ; and he was only ill three days. It would have done you good to have seen him then, for he was so happy ; and he was always talking of you.'

'Was he though ?' said Harry, in a choky voice ; 'and what did he say about me ?'

'Ah, more than I can remember. For one thing, he sent you a message which I had better deliver at once. He said that I was to tell you, with his love, that he hoped you hadn't left off puzzling over the things that you and he last talked about ; at least, not unless some light had come upon them ; which, he said, would be sure to have happened if you had puzzled in the right way. He told me also, that he only wanted to know that, and then he should die perfectly happy.

'Now what things you had been talking about, of course I cannot tell ; but he said, that the light which he wanted you to have was one which should come from heaven, and which would light you as it had him, till you got there too, to meet him again.'

'Ah !' returned Harry, almost bitterly, 'there's one chance less for me, now Roger's gone !'

‘What *do* you mean?’ asked Willoughby, earnestly.

‘Only that I never could get on without him,’ returned Harry. ‘He always got me out of my troubles, and kept me as straight as I have ever kept; and I always liked talking to him.’

‘I see,’ returned Willoughby. ‘You *depended* on the good old fellow, and comforted yourself because you did like talking to him. I know that feeling well. But do you know, that now I’m half-inclined to hope that you may do even better without him than with him? Aye, and that may be the reason why he is taken away from us.’

‘I don’t understand you, James,’ returned Harry shortly; ‘and from what you say, I shouldn’t think you understand me. Yet you must know how hard it is not to sink down till you become a horrid sort of fellow when you’re on board some ships. The pull all seems the wrong way, and there’s nothing to keep you right at all.’

‘Would old Roger have agreed with you in what you have just said?’ asked Willoughby, quietly.

‘Well, I suppose not; but he had never lived on board ship.’

‘No; but that doesn’t matter; you know that he knew of a way by which we may all “keep straight,” as you call it, anywhere, and in any circumstances. He had found a strength *for* himself that didn’t come *from* himself; and he knew that you might have it too, on one condition.’

‘What condition?’ asked Harry.

‘That you honestly seek for it. We all know what sort of fellows are most popular among sailors; and every one likes to be popular. But if a man wants to have any peace or happiness, he can’t be aiming at two things at once. If you would be the jolly, “easy-going-sort-of-fellow,” that generally goes down best among

sailors, why you cannot be the honest character that old Roger wanted to see you.'

'Honest!' answered Harry, indignantly. 'What do you mean?'

'Well, I don't call any man honest that does not try to do his duty to his master, or that does not keep to his engagements; and I'm sure he wouldn't have done so either. You and I know very well, that calling ourselves Christians, as we do, we have a great Master to serve, who is not served by every one around us, and that we are under engagements to Him which forbid our falling into the ways of many of our companions. In the case of an earthly master you know how you would feel bound to act; and I don't think that you would be likely to talk of difficulties which hindered your performance of duties to him.'

'It's all very well talking,' answered Harry; 'but the thing is just this. In the one case I haven't engaged beyond my strength, while in the other perhaps I have, or others have done it for me.'

'I recollect,' replied Willoughby, 'that you once described to me the horrors of sea-sickness, which you suffered at the outset of your first voyage, and how you were ordered when half-dead, and so giddy and sick that you could hardly stand, to climb a mast for the first time. How did you feel then about strength?'

'I hadn't much, certainly; and it seemed to me as if I couldn't obey that order,' answered Harry.

'But you didn't say so, did you; or attempt to get off?'

'No,' said Harry; 'I knew better.'

'And yet there is no promise that I can think of which would insure your not tumbling down and breaking your neck in such a case; nor even that you should have bodily strength for such

dangerous work : while, in the other case, there are many which ought to take away all cowardice.'

They had walked a good way whilst they had been talking, and Willoughby had quite forgotten his improvements. As he uttered these last words, however, they turned a sharp corner, and suddenly encountered Jenny, who was coming to meet them with her baby in her arms.

'There!' cried Willoughby, removing the handkerchief which shaded the little one's face; 'this is one of our additions. Now I hope you approve of her?'

Judging by the loud kisses that were bestowed on her, the young uncle certainly did, though he declared himself 'no judge of babies;' and when she had been sufficiently admired to satisfy her mother, the latter proposed that Harry 'should now go and inspect *their* house.'

'What, then, you don't live with my father and mother?' he said. 'I thought you were all together.'

'No,' said Willoughby, 'they didn't think that advisable; so, you see, we just turned out the old white owl that used to haunt there, and made two or three little rooms in the parts where he used to reside: besides which, we gave notice to the fowls that we should appropriate their domain likewise, and so we obtained a very comfortable little house.'

'But without tearing down the old ivy, I hope!' rejoined Harry; 'for if that's all gone I shall never forgive you.'

'Happily, then, it isn't; only a part of it. And now come inside.'

'Well!' observed Harry, after duly inspecting every crack and corner, 'it's a very pretty place altogether, and I'm glad that you're all so fond of it; and especially that you, old fellow, have

made yourself so much at home in it ; though how you can do so, after the life you've led, passes my comprehension. But mind you, I don't envy you the least atom in the world ; for as to settling down quietly myself to sowing and reaping one year after another, it's what I couldn't do for any money in the world. "A life on the ocean wave," as your song says, Jenny—that's the life for me. I was made for it ; and I'm more at home in it, with all its hardships and all its dangers, than I should be anywhere else.'

'Notwithstanding its great difficulties and temptations—eh?' remarked Willoughby. 'Well, if you were made for a sailor, and I for a farmer, it's a good thing that we have found our proper places ; only don't let us forget that we each have our work to do, and that we are not to live, either as sailor or farmer, simply, or even chiefly, for our own pleasure.'

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